

THE BILLINGS' OVULATION METHOD SIMPLIFIED



Compiled from lectures by RUFINA FORKAH
Edited by PAULETTE SCHATZ

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The cover was designed by Miss Shigamu Uchiyama.

A very special word of appreciation must go to
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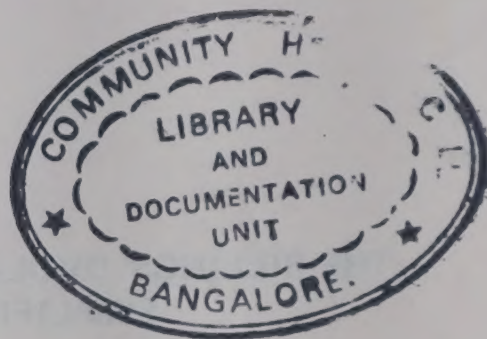
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SIMPLIFIED**

Compiled from lectures by RUFINA FORKAH
Edited by PAULETTE SCHATZ



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Preface	5
Acknowledgement	7
Foreword	9
Introduction (National level)	11
Introduction (Local level)	13
List of Pictures	15

CHAPTERS

1	Christian Marriage by Fr. R. Tampah	17
2	The Billings' Ovulation Method Teacher	21
3	Teaching the Billings' Ovulation Method to Illiterates	24
4	Teaching the Billings' Ovulation Method to Literates	47
5	Teaching the Billings' Ovulation Method to Teenagers	61
6	Teaching the Billings' Ovulation Method to Breastfeeders	69
7	Abortion	79
8	Abstinence	81
9	Questions and Answers	85

PREFACE

The first time I heard Mrs. Forkah giving an introduction to the Billings' Ovulation Method was in February 1980. Both my husband and I were very impressed with the simple way Rufina shared her knowledge of the method. We were familiar with the method and I was excited to meet a fellow O.M. user. I was determined to become her friend ... and it didn't take long. A month later we began working closely. I tried to follow her around to many of her talks, making notes and tapes. It was after her trip to Rome for a Natural Family Planning Conference that we decided that it was becoming necessary to compile her different approaches in teaching the Billings' Ovulation Method. Requests, for written information on how she teaches, were made by local committees along with groups of people from other countries. And thus, we have this book. You may wonder why we never covered some topics. The main chapters here are from ideas developed here. Our work with the premenopause, coming-off-pill or other artificial methods, miscarriages, abortion and childless couple is done through the excellent guidelines set by the Billings' and others in different available O.M. books. So to avoid word by word repetition we have omitted these topics.

How to use the manual:

In the following talks the teacher should ask the audience the questions. Try to get them involved with the pictures. The necessary answers can be added by the teacher if the audience has not mentioned them. Be creative in your approach. Find out about your audience beforehand and be prepared with the appropriate talk. Feel your audience out. You might have to use part of the illiterate chapter and add it to the literate chapter, while at the same time dropping some of the literate chapter. The language has been deliberately made simple so that teachers can understand and follow without undue strain.

We made our pictures on cloth and used wax crayons to color them. To make the color stay we placed newspaper over the colored picture and ironed it with quite a hot iron.

Please use the guidelines set by the Billings' in teaching the Ovulation Method. We have only put out this book as an additional help in giving you assistance to approach your people in a simplified manner.

Paulette Schatz

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to give our sincere thanks to many people who helped in different ways in bringing out this book:

- Drs. John and Lyn Billings for introducing this method to the world.
- Sister Ancilla Fox of the National Catholic Secretariat: Department of Health, for introducing the B.O.M. to Mr. and Mrs. Forkah.
- Father Santa Maria of El-Salvador from whom Rufina learnt as an Ovulation Method teacher trainee how to express several ideas concerning the B.O.M. in pictures.
- The C.I.D.A. — M.A.F. (Canadian International Development Agency — Mission Administered Fund) who offered us cash to enable the manuscript to go to print.
- The sponsorship by the National Catholic Secretariat and Natural Family Planning programme for the B.O.M. in Ghana.
- Right Reverend Gregory E. Kpiebaya, Bishop of Wa, who has shown special interest in the promotion of the B.O.M. in the Diocese of Wa.
- Dr. Sr. Leonie McSweeney's book 'Love and Life'. It was extremely helpful as a guide.
- Dr. Mary Anne Williamson for helping us with our programme in Wa.
- Mrs. Van Lare of the National Catholic Secretariat and Dr. J. B. Wilson of the University of Ghana Medical School for going through the manuscript and sharing their ideas.
- Finally, we are grateful for the encouragement and the tolerance of our husbands Messers Forkah and Schatz who sacrificed a lot to enable us to undertake this venture. To our children, who also sacrificed a lot of our attention, we say thanks.

FOREWORD

Today, more than ever before in our changing society, couples feel the need to regulate the size of their families. The Second Vatican Council has assured married people that the Church understands and sympathizes with their needs and difficulties: "Certain modern conditions often keep couples from arranging their married lives harmoniously and they find themselves in circumstances where, at least temporarily, the size of their families should not be increased" (G.S. 29). However, according to the official teaching of the Church, Catholics may not use the artificial birth control methods offered to society by the modern world. They can only use natural methods to limit the size of their families.

The Billings Ovulation Method (B.O.M.) which is a scientifically sound natural method of birth control answers this need for Catholics. One interesting aspect of this method is that it has no sad side effects and has the blessing of the Church.

But the B.O.M. is more than just a technique of birth control. It gives the woman a better understanding of herself and her fertility cycle and helps the couple to be responsible parents and loving partners. The B.O.M. also helps childless couples to have children.

This book is simple and well adapted with lessons on how to teach the B.O.M. to various categories of people in the North of Ghana. It is adapted especially to those people whose annual cycles of dry and wet seasons and rhythm of cultivation lend a marvellous comparison to the woman's monthly cycle and fertility rhythm.

I know Mrs. Rufina Forkah and Mrs. Paulette Schatz to be exemplary wives and mothers. They are both well versed in the Billing's Ovulation Method and I am happy that they have taken so much time and trouble, with the active encouragement of their husbands, to put this booklet together for the public. The aim of the booklet is to promote happy marriages and so I gladly recommend it to all married couples.

This booklet will also help to destroy the many taboos and erroneous views that exist among our people in the area of married sexuality. Finally, it is my belief that this booklet will help couples in a very practical way to love both each other and their children.

Rt. Rev. Gregory E. Kpiebaya
Bishop of Wa.

INTRODUCTION (National Level)

Family Planning was first introduced into the country by I.P.P.F. in 1967 and since 1970 Ghana has included family planning in its national policy. It was the first major governmental effort to control fertility and thus population growth.

In 1973 the Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral letter expressing deep concern about the way the programme was being organized and counselled the faithful to use family planning in accordance with Catholic principles.

It was not until 1976 that a committee was formed under the influence of Sr. Ancilla Fox of the Department of Health, National Catholic Secretariat to introduce the Billings' Ovulation Method into the country. The committee eventually managed to get the Ghana National Family Planning Secretariat to accept the principle that natural family planning was necessary for some couples on religious and other grounds and agreed to provide funds for the programme.

The first concrete proof of this was in December 1977 when they funded a seminar on the Billings' Ovulation Method given by Sr. Dr. Leonie McSweeney from Nigeria. This was attended by 30 participants who were to form the nucleus of instructors. In February 1978, a delegation of six led by Bishop, Chairman of Department of Health, attended the Melbourne Conference to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Humanae Vitae. This was followed up with two weeks intensive teacher training programme.

Serious efforts were made on the return of the group home: teaching of the B.O.M. was started on a small scale in some parishes. In July 1978, Sr. Dr. Leonie McSweeney was here to conduct a second seminar on the B.O.M.

A Natural Family Planning center has been established within the Catholic Secretariat with funds from the Ghana National Family Planning Programme and they cater for most of our expenses.

To start off the work of the trained teachers, it was found imperative to explain the programme to the priests and religious in the various dioceses. The aim of the orientation lectures was to create a sphere of appreciation for B.O.M. so that those responsible for or involved in the moral and physical development of health in family life in the church would be led to help to promote and make it available to their parishioners and the people in their community.

I am happy to say that Wa diocese took the lead in this apostolate and was fortunate to have such dedicated women like Mrs. Rufina Forkah and Mrs. Paulette Schatz who have done so much work to promote the method.

Josephine R. Van Lare
National Co—ordinator of Natural
Family Planning

INTRODUCTION (Local Level)

My husband and I were first introduced to the Billings' Ovulation Method in 1976 by Sr. Ancilla Fox of the National Catholic Secretariat. In 1978, I was sponsored by the Wa Diocese to go and learn more about the Billings' Ovulation Method in Australia. When I returned I began teaching the method in the diocese. I have been having meetings with primary health care facilitators, mobile clinic personnel, stationary clinics, women in development groups, and public health nurses. I have worked with catechists and their wives, and the Christian Mothers Association. Schools have also invited me to share the Billings' Ovulation Method, with their students.

However, our main Catholic population wishing to use the Billings' Ovulation Method is largely illiterate. Most of our people do not take kindly to direct talk about the man and woman relationship. Also most of the material available to us on the Billings' Ovulation Method is often not relevant to our surroundings. I have felt the need for a guide to teach the Billings' Ovulation Method in the diocese of Wa. I feel this approach, which we are using, could be of immense value to our teachers of the Billings' Ovulation Method.

Rufina Forkah
Instructor in the B.O.M.

PICTURES

PAGE NUMBER

1	Man and Woman talking	25
2	Spacing guinea corn	27
3	Spacing children	28
4	Mother Nature	30
5	Woman and Nature	31
6	Man and Woman standing together in rain (no menses at end)	33
7	Baby and seasons (no menses at end)	34
8	Hen sitting on nest (no egg)/Woman's uterus (no ovulation)	35
9	Hen laying egg/Woman's egg in uterus	36
10	Mother Nature's cycle	38
11	Woman's cycle	39
12	Charting for illiterates — no words — 4 symbols	41
13	Fertility awareness: Student chart (empty)	44
14	Male reproductive organs	48
15	Female reproductive organs	49
16	How a baby is made	51
17	Charting for literates — words — 5 symbols	54
18	Fertility awareness chart and example	56
19	Examples of charting when breastfeeding	74

CHAPTER ONE

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Christ reminds man about the original plan of God for marriage. In His dialogue with the Pharisees He said, "Have you not read that the creator from the beginning made them male and female and this is why a man must leave his father and mother, and cling to his wife, and the two become one body? They are no longer two but one. So what God has united man must not divide." (Matt. 19:5).

In the Church's teaching, Christ has restored the dignity of marriage and made it a sacrament. It therefore gives grace to those who receive the sacrament of marriage in the Church. It brings the couple closer to God. Christian marriage is a call, a vocation. Marriage is *not* for everyone. Some people plunge into marriage like someone plunging into a deep river without knowing how to swim, simply because he sees others swimming.

How can one know it is that particular man or woman God wishes to unite you with? How can one find this out? We should use patience and always ask God to guide us on the path he has chosen for us. If it is destined that you are to marry, God will make it clear to you. There should not be 'afternoon marriages.' That means picking up a partner at random. Who does not want to examine a dress before buying it? We should look, examine and choose our partners; this is a decision for life. Therefore you must love the partner you choose. There should be no force from any angle of life. At times we run into marriages as a matter of convenience. Parents or friends push us into marriage. The entering of marriage in such a state puts thorns and thistles already on your path. Your partner should be one who should be your happiness here on earth and who will help you find eternal happiness. Ask yourself the question, "Will this partner help me to be a better Christian?"

A Christian may ask, "I have performed the necessary customary rites, why must I marry in the Church?" The church teaches that a man and a woman who wish to marry according to the Will of Christ are to do so in a Church before a lawful minister or representative of the Church. The Church is both a human and divine institution. Every institution has some regulations and identification marks. In the Church too we need some regulations, much more so because it is a sacred institution.

When Christ came, John the Baptist was baptizing people of good will who were looking for justification and went to him. What did Jesus do? He knew that He was God, He knew that He was higher than John, but He went to John for Baptism,

It was not just to follow the formality of the just but He knew that it was the will of His Father. He did it and the Father was happy with Him. (Matt. 3:16). Consequently, if it is Christ's will that we follow through the Church's teaching, we should accept this teaching of the Church. If you refuse to be married in the Church, how can Christ be happy with your situation? How can you receive the sacramental grace that you need to live as husband and wife and through that get to heaven some day?

We need to marry in the Church because we need the grace for our married life. The Church is the dispenser of this grace we need. Why else did Christ institute the Church at all? There may be very good reasons for some of us marrying outside the Church but then how do we bear witness to Christ in our lives? Being a Christian means bearing witness to Christ.

There is one reason why some of you do not want to have Church marriages. The reason is that you are afraid to commit yourselves — to Christ in marriage. You do not fully trust Christ, either because you are not sure of your partner or you want more freedom — you do not want to be tied to one person. Then I may ask whether you really know what game you are playing with your life and how fair you are to your partner — and to your Lord and Master Jesus as well as the Church as a whole?

Christian marriage is a challenge. The Christian who is called to this challenge but refuses to accept it is not a Christian. For we forget that the Sacraments give help — grace to those who are called to it. These graces are those special helps which God gives to us to carry out His work well, to enable us to bear witness to Christ in whatever circumstances that we find ourselves. Can one imagine a farmer who would send his son to the farm without the appropriate tool? It would seem that we forget the sacramental help of the Christian marriage.

Someone may ask, "What if I want to try to see if my partner is potent and whether I could stay with her/him before I commit myself to a Christian marriage?" Where there is true love and trust in God there is no need for a trial. You will show respect for each other, respect for yourself and especially respect for Christ if you wait. After the Church has blessed your union you may then come together physically, but not before. Before you were not recognized as one. Before you were not united in the true love of Christ. When you have a Christian marriage your true love should bloom and spread its joy everywhere.

After marriage there is the factor of procreation. I wish to clarify one point, mainly that of the childless couple. In the Dagaaba concept, to marry and not have children amounts to a curse. Yet we see that some Christian marriages do not have any children. We won't go into details about why this is so but the important thing to note is that procreation is not the main aim of the Christian marriage. Children come as a result of the expression of love. Where this is not achieved it does not mean there is no love. Nor that God does not love, but it is rather a sign of love – a mystery. For God said to Paul, "My power is manifest in your weakness." Childless couples therefore in my view should be given special attention in recognizing the loving hand of God over them.

For other couples, their expression of love results in children. What is expected of these parents? "Dakpaa taa lieme kye gbengme meng beebe." (No rose without a thorn). These parents face the obligation to educate their children; to bring them up in the Christian religion. 'To him whom more is given more will be demanded of him.' The Christian education of a child by the parents is a duty, the fulfillment of which cannot be stressed enough. If we glance at our catechism we see our duties well outlined but who sees that they are carried out? We all gladly say the parents know their duty and ought to do it. It is the duty of the parents to pray with their children and share their knowledge of Christ with them.

The key to Christian marriage is faith – faith that leads to prayer. If you want a Christian marriage you will have to invite Christ into your life together. He will hear your daily invitation through your daily prayers. It is only through His love that a husband and wife will be able to truly love each other.

By: Fr. Romanu Tampah
Secretary to Diocesan Health Committee

CHAPTER TWO

THE BILLINGS' OVULATION METHOD TEACHER

The best O.M. teacher is a couple — husband and wife team. But usually the woman is more available to the people. That is alright, but the husband's presence and contribution is still extremely important. He doesn't have to be at all the meetings but his presence is an example to the new couples. If the husband is there, other husbands will be encouraged to attend. We chose the married couple because they have the sexual experience behind them, and the people know this. A lot of your teaching is through your own experience. Once you are an O.M. couple your love is hard to hide and love helps in teaching the Ovulation Method.

This does not mean that sisters, priests and other single lay people cannot help to teach the method. We have just mentioned that the married couple is the best teacher. The role of the unmarried in helping the spread of the method plus guiding the clients in their charting is very important. But introductions and main class studies should be given by married people. If a single woman wants to teach how to chart, she herself should have been charting for at least one year.

To be a teacher you should have registered with a qualified O.M. teacher and you should have attended the full training course. After, at least, one year of charting, you should take an examination prepared by the Billings' O.M. Centre in Australia (choice of oral or written). Your O.M. teacher will determine if you are a good candidate for teaching the method and then she/he will guide you through the various teaching techniques necessary.

As you will all realize this topic is a very sensitive one, and so to be a teacher you must be guided by the following:

- (a) Establish a good working relationship between yourself and your clients. You don't need to be a professor or a doctor to be a good O.M. teacher.
- (b) Your aim must be to make the method work well. You must therefore be courteous, kind and understanding towards your clients. Let your clients know from the outset that no particular pattern is the rule, because the people you teach may want to teach others their patterns.
- (c) Husbands should be encouraged to be present, since the success of the method depends on their co—operation.
- (d) Listen more to your clients and speak as little as possible.
- (e) Take the history of your clients. Don't pry (e.g. inquiring too curiously into other people's affairs).

- (f) Don't embarrass the people when you are talking to them, but always emphasize the rules about abstinence if the couple do not wish to have more children.
- (g) Create a very friendly environment — an environment of ease and respect.
- (h) Give the information exactly without exaggerating.
- (i) As an O.M. teacher avoid the habit of saying "I am not going to deliver for the next 5 years or so" or "My next delivery is going to be a boy or a girl".
- (j) Always remember to keep the teaching method simple.
- (k) If you do not know something about artificial family planning then admit it. Do not speak falsely about their methods.
- (l) Learn about the 4 kinds of Natural Family Planning.
- (m) Never give charts at your first lecture, especially for the illiterate. Give the couple time to think about what they have heard.
- (n) For the literates, arouse the curiosity of your clients by letting them understand the male and female physiology — since it is the male sperm and the female egg that cause pregnancy.
- (o) Let the clients know that when pregnant the fertilized egg is now God's and not the mothers. She should therefore take care of it and not let it drop.

The couple should register at the first charting lesson.

CHAPTER THREE

TEACHING THE BILLINGS' OVULATION METHOD TO ILLITERATES

1 Introductory talk

We have come to you today to talk about a method on natural family planning. It is called the Billings' Ovulation Method often referred to as O.M. Everyone say O.M. (audience responds). We will call it O.M. from now on. It is a natural method. This means that you don't have to take anything like medicine. With this method you have to study nature for a while.

Nothing reveals O.M. so well as nature. The day needs the night, the soil needs the rain, the seed needs the land, and the man and woman need each other.

Picture 1

What is this a picture of? This is a picture of a husband and a wife.
What are they doing? They are talking to each other.
What do you think they are talking about?
Do you talk to each other?

The man and the women are a very interesting pair. One cannot function well without the other. If the woman decides to do the O.M. by herself, without her man knowing of it, it will not be successful. The success of O.M. depends on both the man and the woman. It is their ability to make babies, that is to be learnt about. You can't have a baby with only one. We will teach each of you about individual fertility and then how you can combine what you have learnt. You have to decide if you want a baby or you want to wait. This decision is made together by talking.

This method is to help you have a happy marriage. We want to teach the husband and the wife how to know when the woman is fertile. There are many people we can help. We can help

- 1. you to space your children
- 2. the breastfeeding mother
- 3. the childless couple
- 4. those in their menopause and
- 5. those who need a boy or a girl in desperate situations.



Picture 1: Man and Woman talking

Many people who do not want to have children right away (at this time) do not like this method because they have to abstain from sex during the fertile time. Many couples do not have the patience to wait. But those who pray for patience and exercise love for each other know the beauty of having sex after the fertile time is over. It is not sex which shows love for each other. It is the fact of caring and spending time with each other.

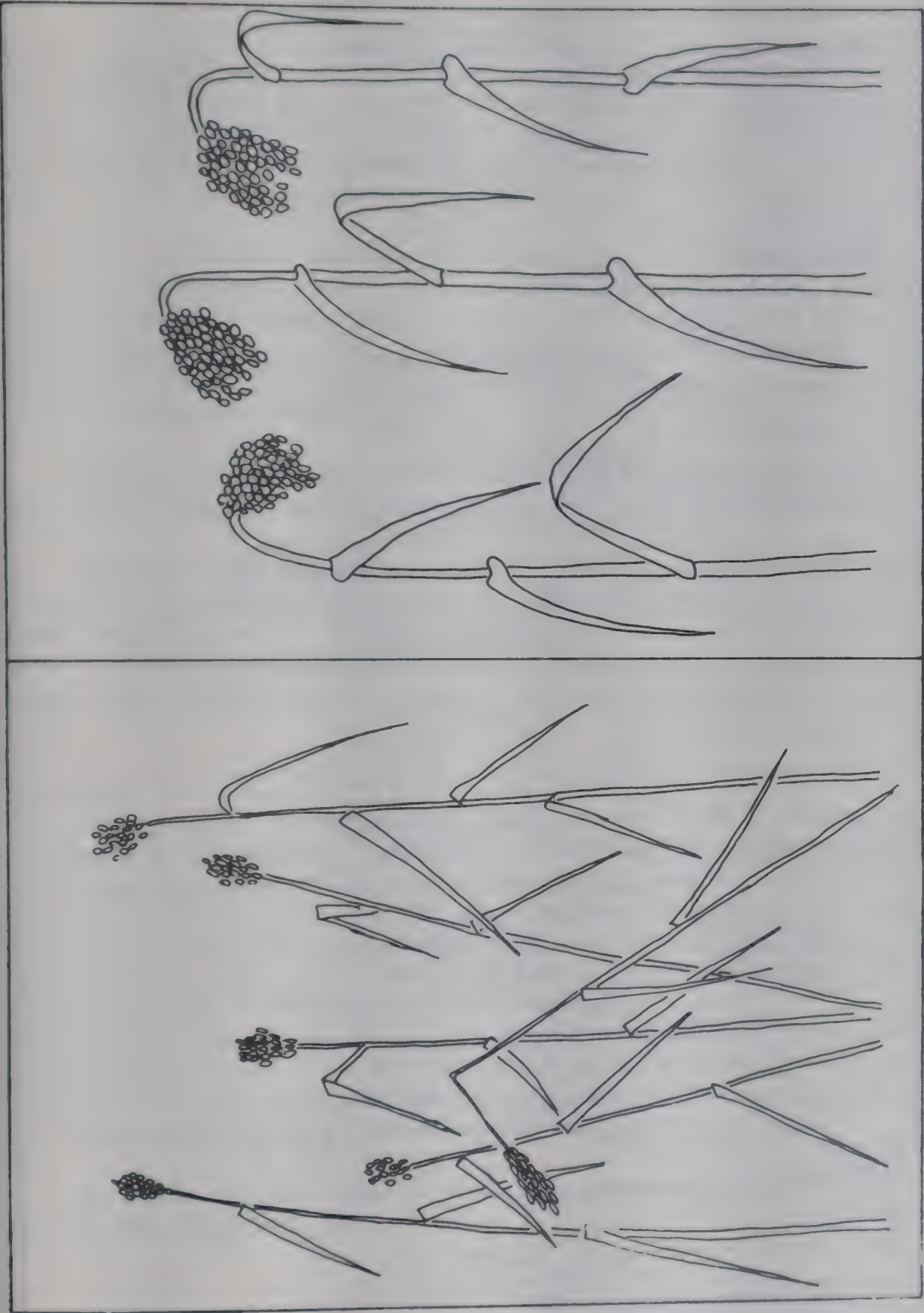
Picture 2

What is this a picture of? This is a picture of a farm.
What do the two farms have in common? The acreage.
Which crop do you want? The second one.
Why? There is a better yield.
Why is there a better yield? The first crop was sown too close together. There were too many seeds. The second crop was spaced evenly and had room to grow. Even with only three stalks the harvest will still be better than from the first farm.

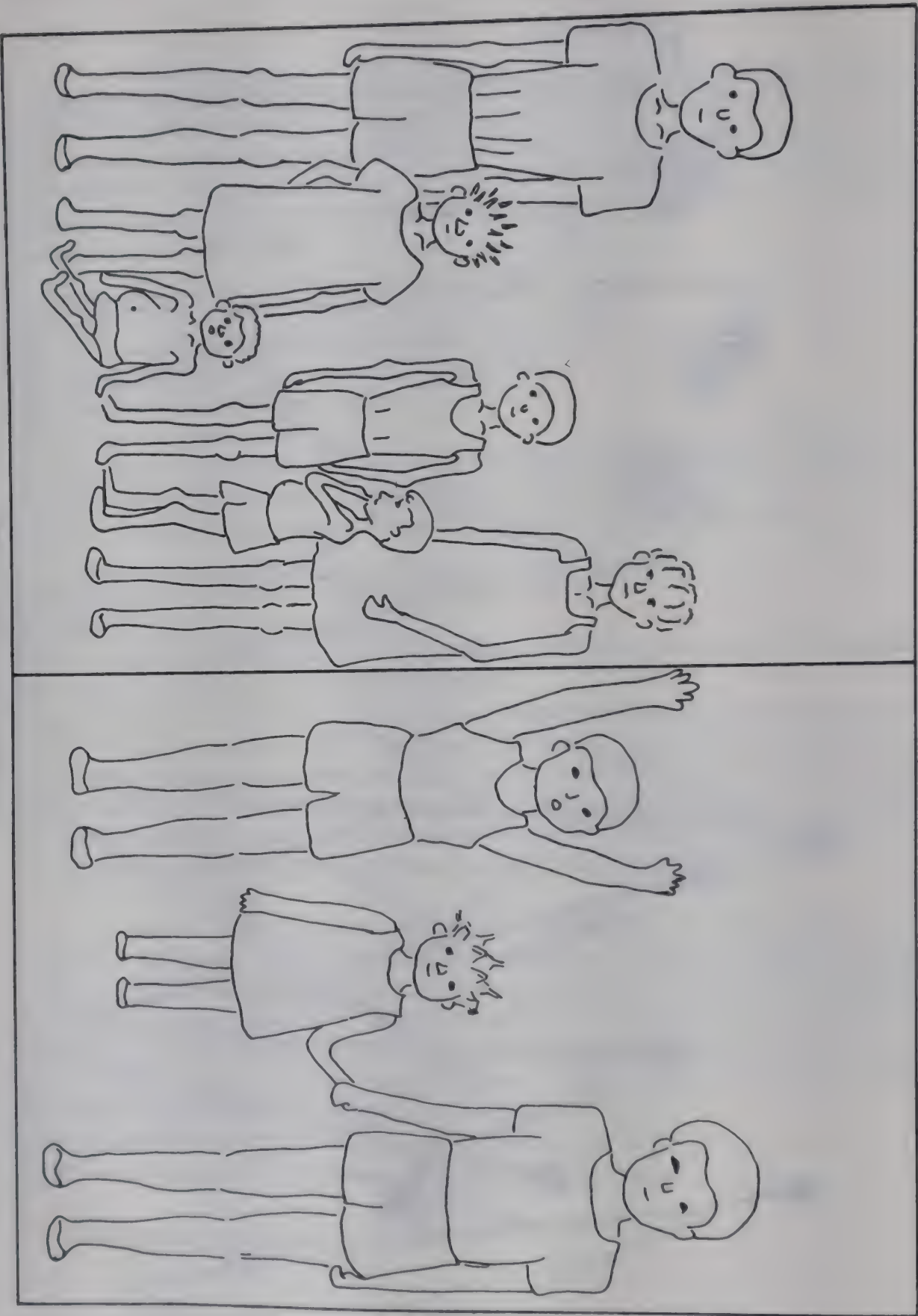
Picture 3

What do you see? We see two families.
Both of these marriages are 6 years old. Which family would you want? The second one. Why? The children are healthier and happier.
What is wrong with the first family? The first family had a child every year and the children were not planned. They just moved 'by heart.' Every year they have had a child. The mother did not have proper care during the pregnancies because she was always tired. The children are undernourished and uneducated because the parents do not have enough money to care for six children. It is difficult for the mother and the father to spend time with the children and give them the love they need.

The second couple practises the O.M. They space their children properly. The woman is not tired of being pregnant or breastfeeding. The children are healthy and if you visit them you will see that they are happy and there is love in the home. Can you sow on anybody's land without permission? No. You have to get permission, then it becomes yours and you can sow what you like. Can you go to the market and just select any woman to have your children? No. You have to meet the parents and legally marry. Then you can have your children.
Have you ever asked yourself "How can I improve my farm?"
Have you ever asked yourself "How can I improve my marriage?"



Picture 2: Spacing guinea corn



Picture 3: Spacing children

At times your children are sick from measles and diarrhoea and you do not know what to do. Once again you have to talk to each other. Picture 1. If your children are sick you talk to each other. You have to decide whether you should take them to a clinic. When you want your marriage to be better you also have to sit down together and decide on what to do to improve it.

Before you can learn about how the body works you have to understand nature. We need seeds to plant on a farm. The man has the seed to make a baby. We need land to put the seeds into so that they will grow. The woman is the land. The man, from the age of puberty until he is a very old man, can plant a seed every day. The woman, from the age of puberty, until she is about 40 years old, can receive the seed on only a few days of the month.

Do you know mother nature? Look around outside and see the soil, the clouds, the sun and all the other natural surroundings. (Let the audience name other things).

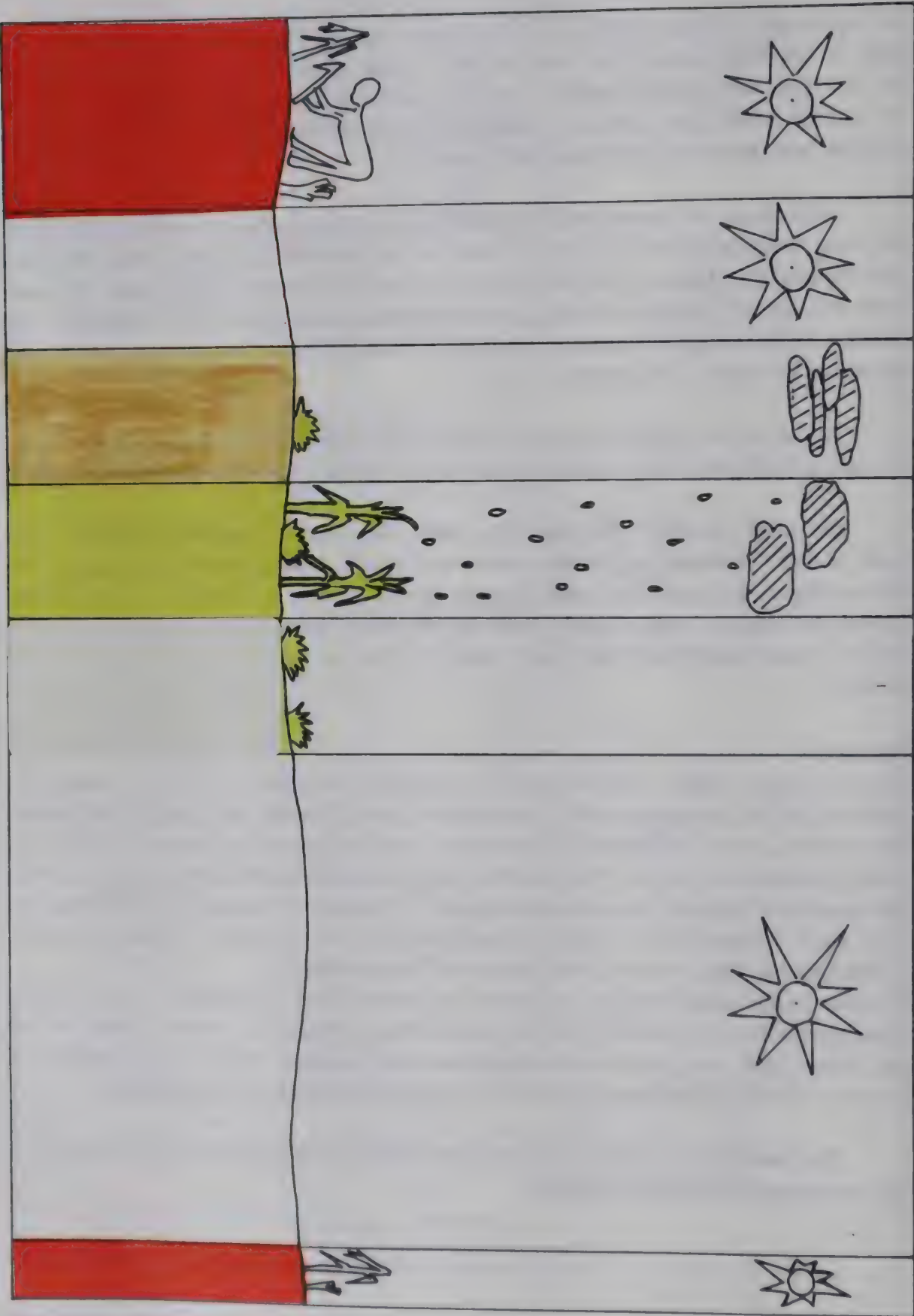
We want to teach you about the cycle. Say cycle. (Audience responds). The cycle is like a bicycle tire. It goes round and round. Mother nature has a cycle. The farmer knows this cycle very well because he works with it. To make a farmland the farmer first has to clear a place, wait for the rains, sow, and then harvest. Mother nature's cycle consists of two main seasons. They are the dry season and the rainy season.

Picture 4

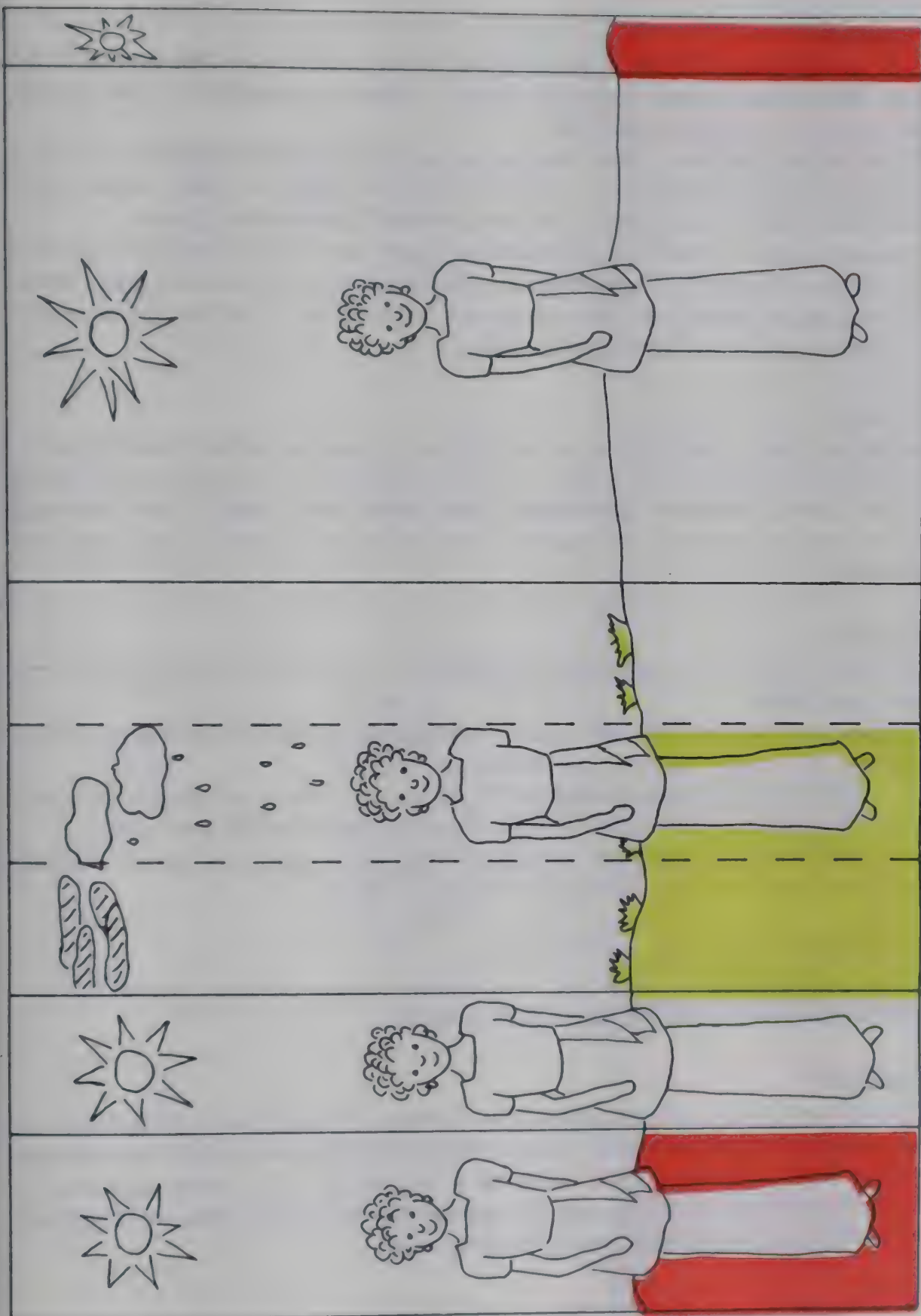
We will begin mother nature's cycle by clearing the land in the dry season and preparing it for planting in the rainy season. After clearing the land the dry season will continue for a short time. Soon clouds begin to gather and the sky darkens and there is wetness in the air. The rain then comes and the farmer plants his crops. After the rains have finished the ground continues to be moist for some time. Although the rains have stopped there is still enough moisture in the soil to germinate a seed. Following this, the sun shines hard and the dry season begins.

(Teacher holds some seeds in her hand and shows them to audience). Can we plant these during the dry season? No. Why not? Because the soil is not wet. After the sun has shone hard for a long time the land has dried up grass and old corn stalks on it. It is time to clear the land again. And so mother nature begins her cycle again.

The woman also has a cycle. She, like mother nature, has two main seasons — the dry season and the rainy season.



Picture 4: Mother nature



Picture 5: Woman and nature

Picture 5

Look at her cycle. She will begin with her menses which is like the clearing of the land. The woman's inside is cleared. There is a short dry season after the clearing. Can you plant in the dry season? No.

If the woman and man come together during this time the woman will not 'pick seed'. Soon the clouds gather and the woman will begin her rainy season. What happens to a seed if you plant it in the rainy season? It germinates, it grows.

The same with a woman's cycle. During her rainy season, if a man enters her with his seed it will grow. For 3 days after her rains have stopped the woman is still fertile. The dry season comes next and the woman is not fertile. If she did not 'pick seed' during the rainy season the menses will return.

Picture 6

Nature has made it such that a woman first has to have her menses (clearing season), then the dry season continues. She will have a rainy season and if land and seed are united (sown), pregnancy (germination takes place) and a child is born (harvest). If the man and woman come together during the woman's rainy season a baby will be made.

Picture 7

The only time you can get the woman pregnant is when the clouds gather and the rains begin to fall.

Can you see the baby's feet still sticking out into the dry soil? This means that 3 days after the rainy season the baby can still occur.

How many months after planting millet do you wait for the harvest? 3 months.

How many months before a baby is born, after it has been created? 9 months.

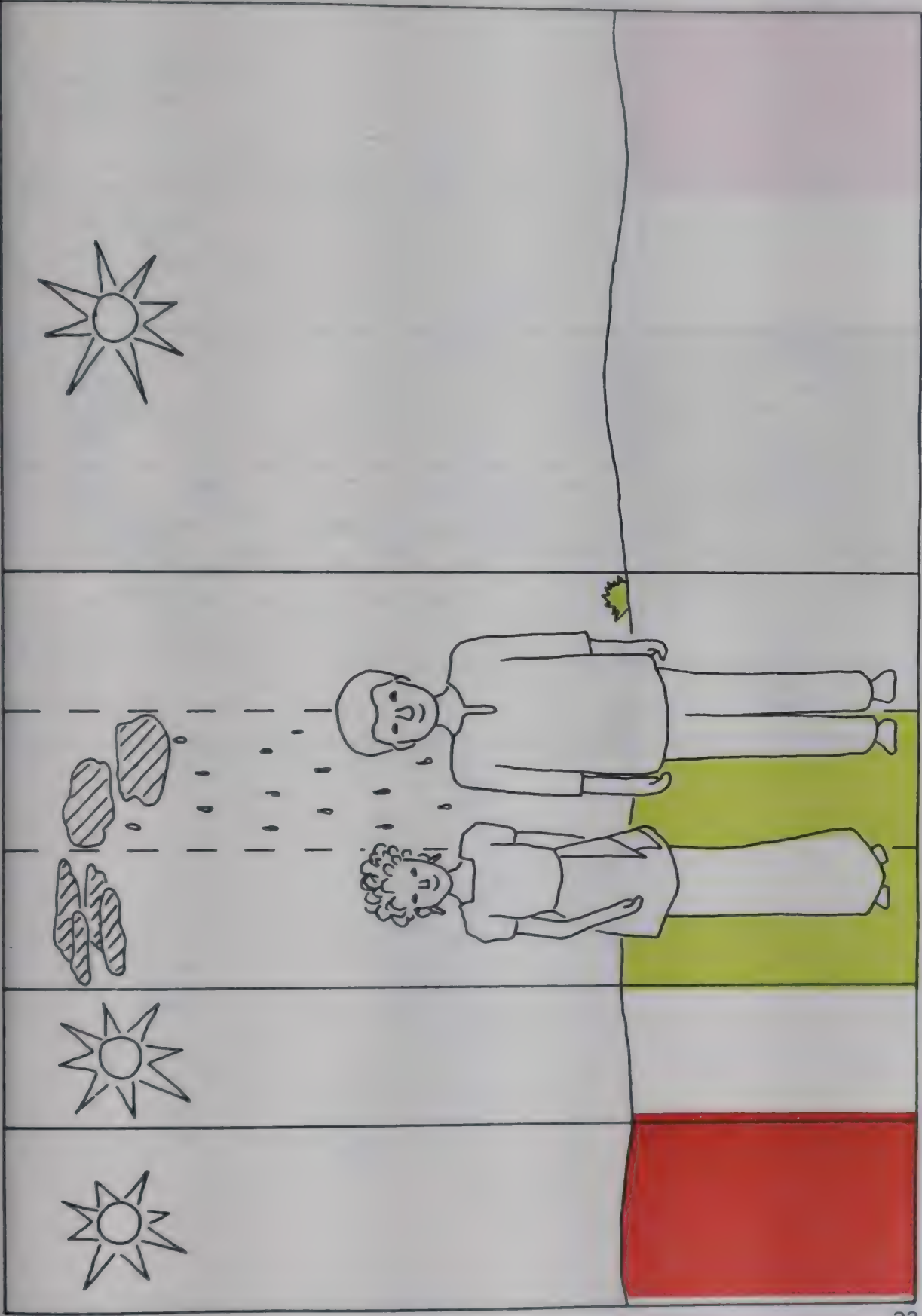
The clearing season will come some time after the harvest. The woman's menses will return some time after the baby is born.

Picture 5

If the man and woman have not been together during the rainy season, no baby will be made and the clearing season will come soon.

Picture 8

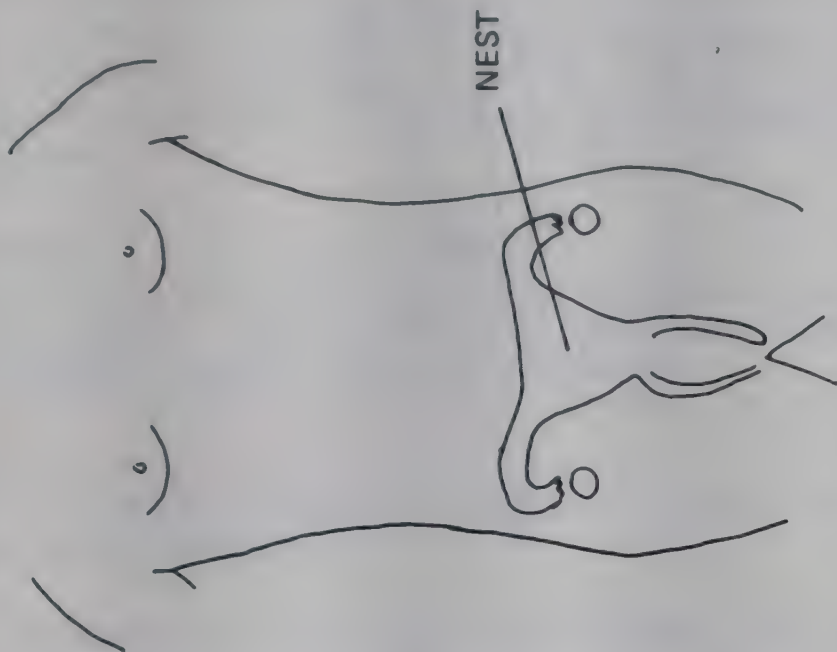
The woman is like a chicken. She also has a nest and she also lays an egg. Have you ever seen how rough and coarse a hen's nest is on the outside, but on the inside how does it look? It is smooth and comfortable for the eggs. The woman also prepares her nest once a month for her egg. If a woman lies down this is how she would look inside if we cut her stomach open. (Point out nest).



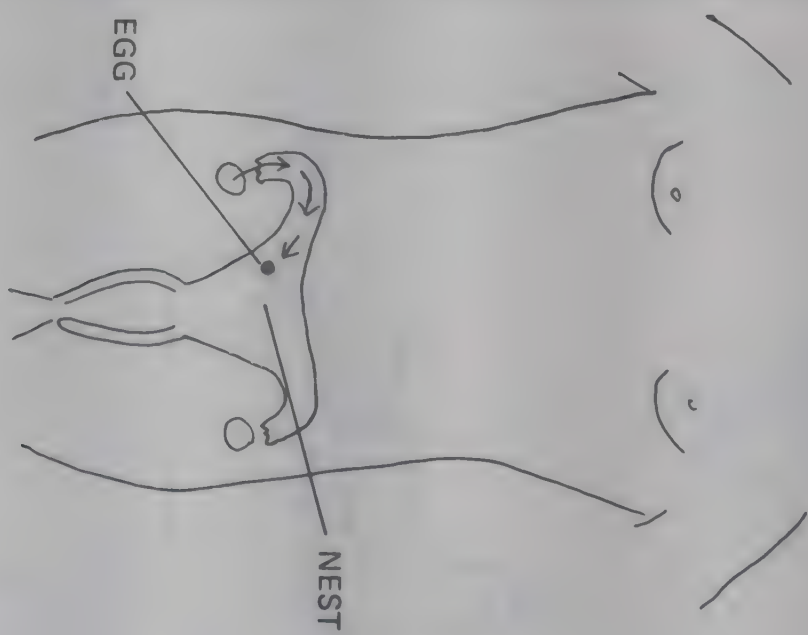
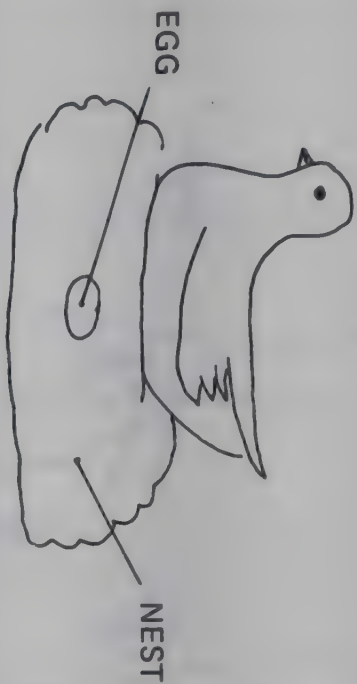
Picture 6: Man and woman standing together in rain (no menses at end)



Picture 7: Baby and seasons (no menses at end)



Picture 8: Hen sitting on nest ((no egg)/Woman's uterus (no ovulation))



Picture 9: Hen laying egg/ Woman's egg in uterus

Picture 9

Look at the hen. She has just laid her egg. If the cock has given the hen his seed before she laid the egg, she can sit on the egg and it will become a baby chick after some time.

The woman has also just laid her egg. If the man is with the woman when her egg is in the nest, the man's seed will unite with her egg and make a baby. A woman only lays an egg during her rainy season. If the man is not with her when she has the egg, the egg will die and fall out of the woman. The woman will not even know that it has happened.

Picture 10

So now you have heard about mother nature and the woman and about their cycles. A cycle is a circle. Look at an example of mother nature's cycle. It happens every year. (Expand on seasons for review and ask question).

Picture 11

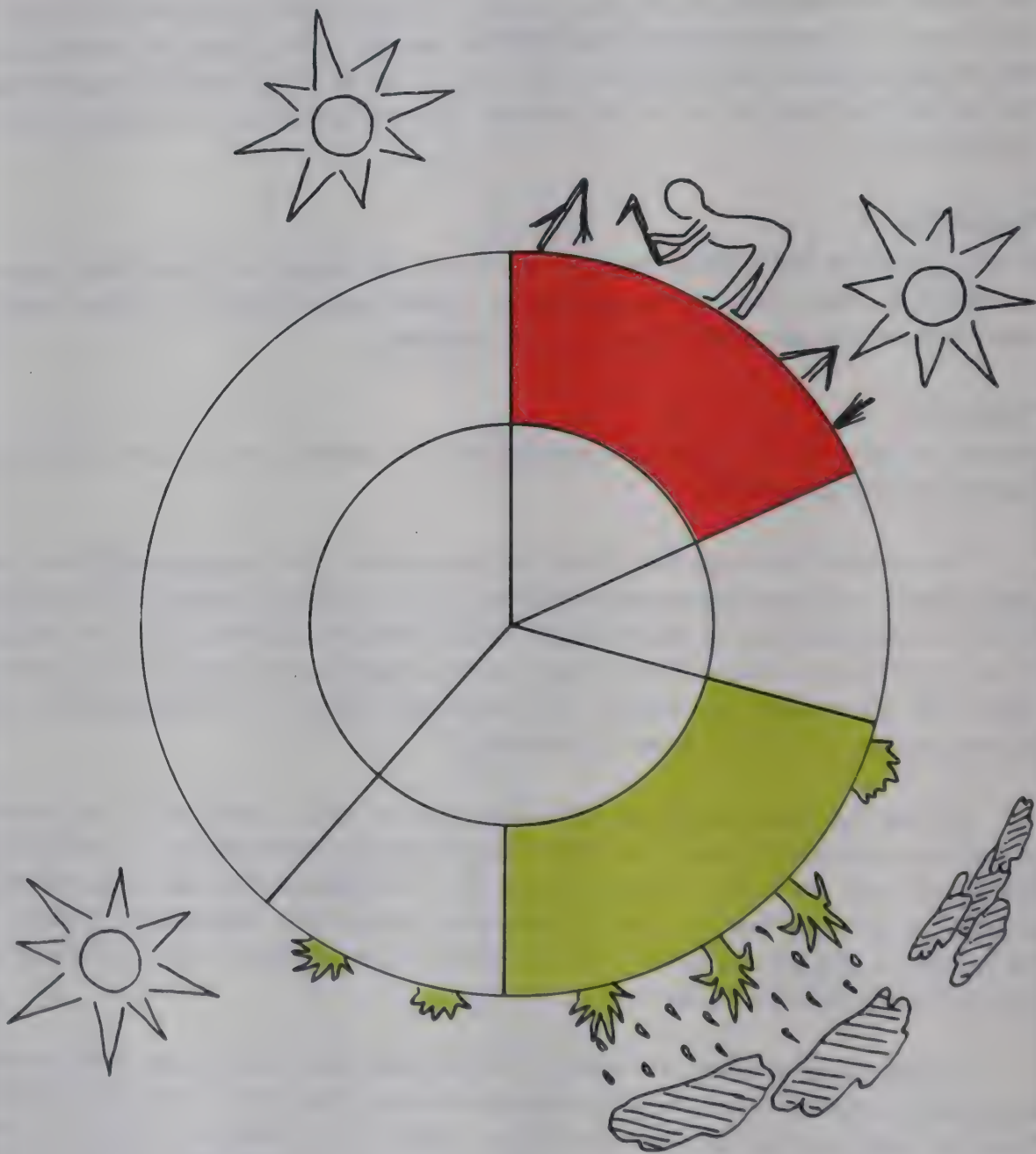
Here is an example of a woman's average cycle. It happens every month. (Explain diagram and ask questions).

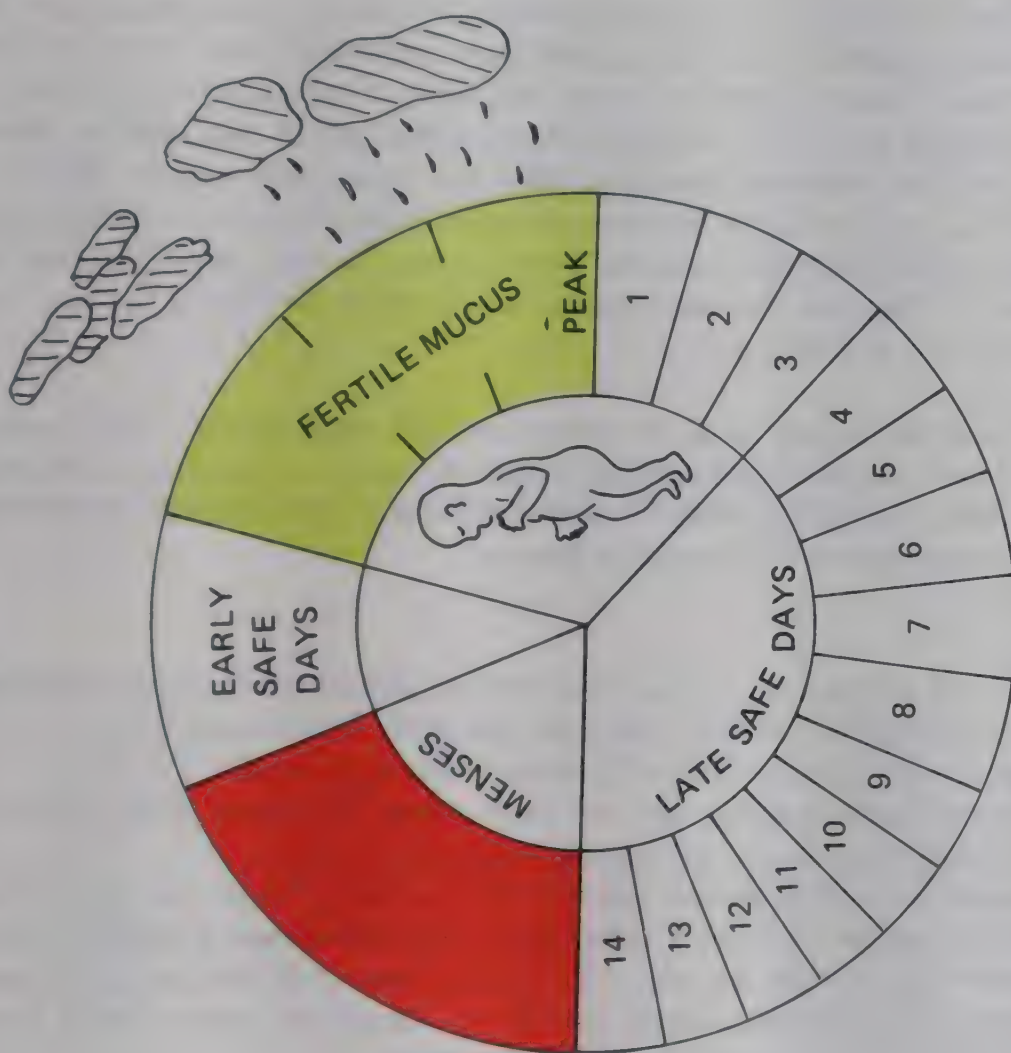
The woman now may ask "How do I know when I am laying an egg? How can I tell when I am in my dry season and when I am in my rainy season?" From today on the woman will have to check herself to see what she is excreting from her vagina. If she is in her dry season she will see nothing except urine. If she is in her rainy season the woman will see mucus. This mucus will stretch. It is important that the woman touches the mucus to see if it stretches.

During the beginning of the rainy season, as the nest is being built, the woman will see a sticky white mucus like saliva from the mouth. When the nest is nearly built the woman will see a clear stretchy mucus like raw eggwhite. The egg is usually laid around the time she sees the stretchy eggwhite mucus. Then, although the vagina on the outside is dry the egg in the nest is still good. It is waiting for the man's seed to join it. After 3 days it is surely dead.

During the dry season the material used to make the nest soft slowly falls apart. Just like the chicken's old nest. The menses come and this is the woman's old lining from her nest coming out. The nest will be relined for her next rainy season. If the man's seed reached the woman's egg, a baby is made, and the baby will grow in the nest for 9 months before it comes out.

Picture 10: Mother nature cycle





Picture 11: Woman's cycle

11 Charting

(This is the second meeting which occurs a week to a month later. It is not necessary for the men to attend this lecture. The women are more relaxed to ask questions if men are not present).

Maybe you and your husband have decided to try the O.M. We will now teach you how to chart. There is not one way of making a chart so you should not try to copy from your neighbour. Each woman will have a different chart. Every woman is different. Every cycle is different. Again let's look at nature. After the clearing season, some people get rain on their land the next day, others may wait for weeks before the rain. The woman is the same. After her menses she may get her rainy season or she may have to wait a few days or weeks. Sometimes it rains on only half of the village and the other half stays dry. Some women get their rainy season while others are still in their dry. So every woman has to chart for herself. No one can do it for you. We are all different.

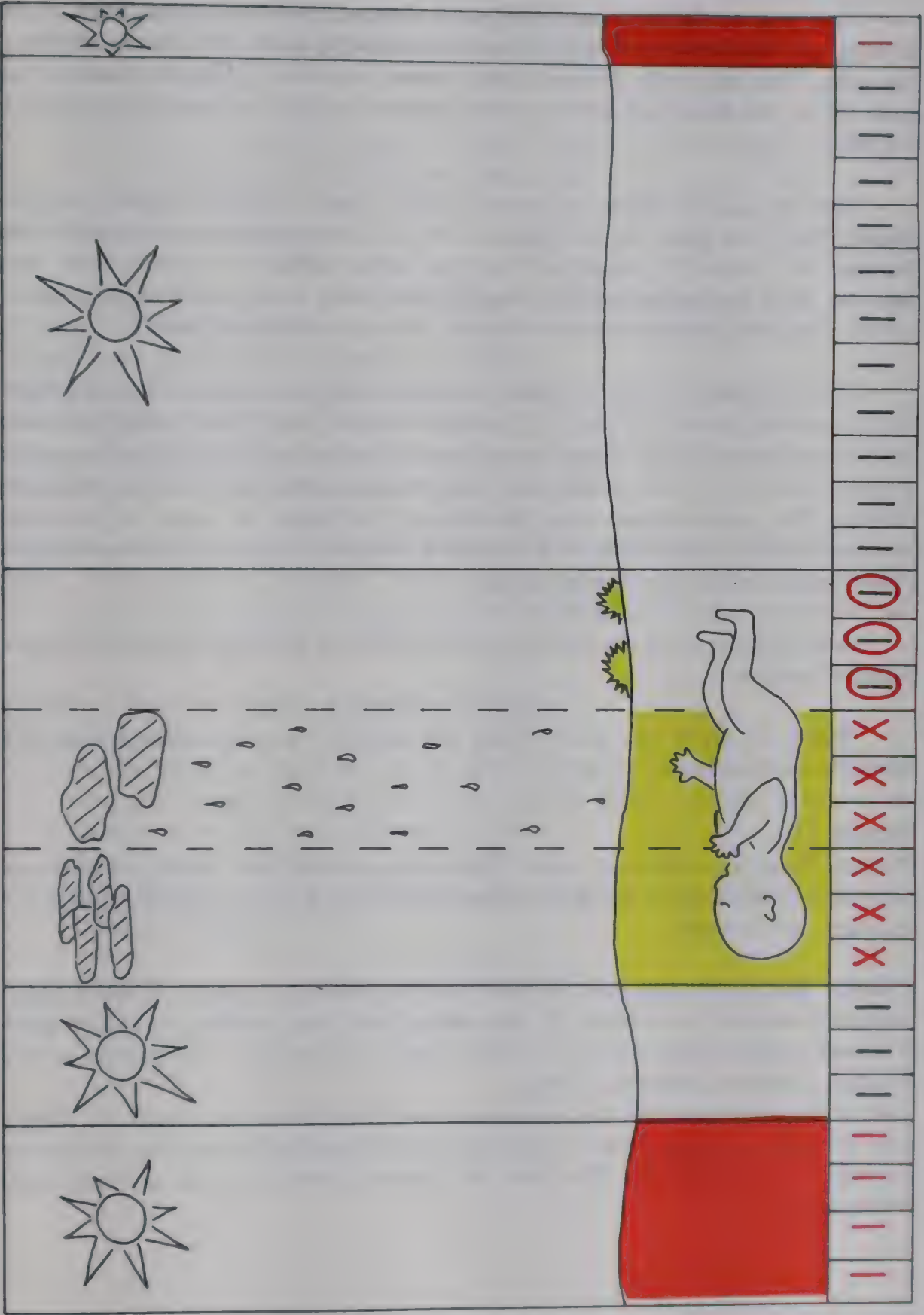
Every time the woman goes to urinate she will wipe herself – just on the outside. (Emphasis on not inserting fingers into the vagina is important). She will wipe herself with toilet roll or pieces of cloth she has put aside especially for wiping. She will look at the toilet roll and see what there is.

Picture 12

At the bottom, of this picture, you can see how one woman was charting. When she had her menses she made a red stick. How many red sticks did she make? Then she made some blue sticks for her dry season. How many days? Then the clouds began to gather and her rainy season came. For 6 days she saw stretchy mucus. She made a red x for each day. Let's count them. She remembered that although she was dry, for the next 3 days, the baby's feet were still able to appear. She put a red circle O around the next 3 dry days. How many days after that did the sun shine for the dry season? 11. So she put 11 blue sticks. The time began for her clearing season and she saw her menses. What mark do you put for menses?

So now you ask "How do we keep our chart?".

The woman will make some marks on her charting paper. (Teacher uses blackboard and red and blue chalk. For about ten minutes the four signs should be practiced by the women on the board. They are a blue 1, a red 1, a red x, and a red O. Volunteers can try to make them on the board).



Picture 12: Charting for illiterates — no words — 4 symbols

You have to do the stretch test every time you finish urinating. Then, in the evening, you make the mark. Let us say you test all day today and you see nothing – just urine. Then you make the mark which shows you are dry. (Teacher makes a blue stick (1) on the board and calls on some students to also come and do it. Mark 5 dry days).

One day you will check and see some white mucus which is like saliva from the mouth. This is the mark you will make in red (x). (Some students come up and make the sign for 4 days. It is important that the teacher praises her students when they take the chalk and make the sign. Most of them have never held a chalk or pencil before. They need your encouragement when moving to pencil and paper).

Then the woman observes some clear mucus like raw eggwhite. It will stretch. This is marked also with a red x. (Students mark this for 2 days). After that there are dry days. Make 14 days. (This is good practice for the students). Do you remember anything about the rainy season and what happens after the rains have stopped? Although the rains no longer come, the ground is still moist for a seed to germinate. Also the woman is still fertile for 3 days after her rains. Put a red circle around each of the 3 dry days after the woman's rains.

After the dry days the menses will come. Use a red stick (1) for that. Mark 5 days of menses.

Red is for joy if you want a baby and danger if you do not want one. Blue means the woman is dry.

Picture 13

(Teacher shows an example of a chart. She explains how to use it. Today's date should be written down. Explain the sexual intercourse line and the line where the blue and red marks will be made).

(Teacher hands out duplicated student fertility awareness charts on white paper along with red and blue pencils. On the back of the paper students are told to make 3 menses. Assistant goes around to check. Then make 6 mucus, 3 circle days, and 13 dry days. Assistant checks each time).

Turn to the side of the page where there are lines. (The teacher has already put today's date on each individual paper. She points out the line for the date and the line for marking sexual intercourse. She tells the students where the blue and red marks will be put).

You will do a cycle by yourselves now. (Assistant is going about helping).

1. Begin with 1 day menses. (If correct then tell them to add 4 days).
2. Make 4 dry days.
3. Make 3 saliva days.
4. Make 3 clear mucus or raw egg white days. (Use one term not both).
5. Make 3 dry days and circle each one in red. why?
6. Make 10 dry days.
7. Make 4 days menses.

(Do more examples together. Make a short cycle and a long cycle.)

Questions for the students:

Show me the rainy season? How many days is it?

How many dry days after the rains before the menses?

How many dry days after the menses?

When can you be with your husband and not get pregnant?

When can you be with your husband and get pregnant?

(Give the students a new chart with today's date to take home and begin charting today. Darken the line on which they should mark). Do not wait for the menses. On the top of the chart both the husband's and wife's names will appear because this chart is not his or hers it is OURS. Why?

RULES to follow for beginners in ordinary situations.

1. Chart every night.
2. Do not have sex until you have seen and charted one rainy season. It may take one month. At times the man's seed and the mucus look alike and the woman cannot tell if it is her mucus or not.
3. Do the stretch test always.
4. After charting for 1 cycle bring the chart to the teacher at the next meeting to give you advice.

CYCLE SONG to the tune of "Are You Sleeping?". This is taught after the charting lesson.

The time from the first day of one menses to the first day of the next menses is called a **CYCLE**. The first day of the menses is **DAY ONE** of the cycle. At every new menses start on a new line.

44

Picture 13: Fertility awareness: Student chart (empty)

ENGLISH

Watch your cycle 2 x's
Chart it through 2 x's
Menses early dry days 2 x's
Fertile days
Late dry days

WAALE

Kaara e kyu song
Kaara e cycle
Sohoo song
Kyu baabaa bibi — kuone
Maahoo bibie
Baabaa bibi — kuone.

DAGARE

Kaara fo Kyuu see
Kaara fo cycle
Soroo relaa
See baaroo bibi — kuone
Maarong — bibie
Baara bibi — kuone.

ISAALING

Ben n tinnga hening 2 x's
Magle bil worung 2 x's
Tinnga hening ne suomu
Che hilla he to haring
Puong che kene
Haring che hilla.

CHAPTER FOUR

TEACHING THE BILLINGS' OVULATION METHOD TO LITERATES

(Teachers, nurses, etc.)

1 Introductory talk

I have come to give you a talk on the Billings' Ovulation Method. I think you have all heard of other methods of family planning. Some methods that you might have heard of are the condom, the pill, the loop, the injection, abortion and others. I am encouraged by coming to talk to groups like your because you already know about contraceptive methods. So I only try to teach the Natural Family Planning, to be specific the Billings' Ovulation Method. This method has almost the same success rate as the contraceptive pill. While most family planning methods prevent conception the Billings' Ovulation Method enables couples to understand their combined fertility and to use it either to produce children or to prevent having children when properly instructed.

The Billings' Ovulation Method is part of Natural Family Planning. When we say natural family planning we cover a wide topic. We have the Calendar or Rhythm method. We also have the Temperature Method. For those of you who have thermometers and can use them, you can use the Temperature method. Then we have the Billings' Ovulation Method. When the three are put together, the Rhythm, the Temperature and the B.O.M. we get the Symptothermic Method. Sometimes we combine the methods for you to use, if necessary. This is for the childless or subfertile couple usually.

There are many advantages to the B.O.M. Couples use it because they want to space their children. They may have just had a child and want to wait two years. Others use it to achieve pregnancy. Some use it during breastfeeding. When you are breastfeeding, you and your husband can live together without any fear of unplanned pregnancy. And we can also help those couples who want to choose the sex of their baby.

We now move to the B.O.M. What is ovulation? It means egg release. Our topic is going to centre on how we are going to recognize when an egg is being released. Without an egg a sperm cannot unite to make a human being.

When you get to the market on a market day there is always a large crowd comprising of men and women. All are alike in having arms, legs, ears, etc. But they differ — because the body of a man is different from a woman. These differences were not unplanned. It is God's plan to continue procreation. You also know that every part of the body has a function. To live we need food and air so some parts are for taking in food while other parts are for taking in air; and some parts were made especially to pass on life.

We will explain to you the parts of the male and female reproductive systems since it is the male sperm and the female egg that through uniting causes pregnancy.

Picture 14

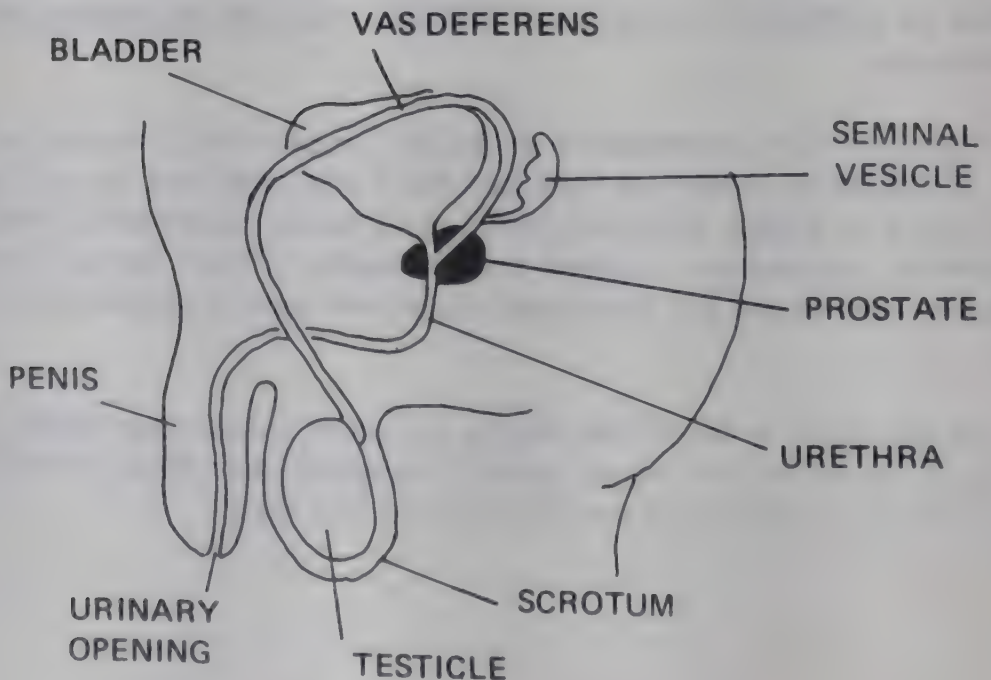
This is a picture of the male reproductive organs.

The **TESTICLES** or testes are the male sex glands. They produce the sperm. They are in a sac called the **SCROTUM**.

There are two **VAS DEFERENS** measuring each about 15 to 17 inches. They carry the sperm during the ejaculation or when the man releases the sperm through his penis.

The two **SEMINAL VESICLES** and the **PROSTATE GLAND** produce secretions which make up part of the ejaculate also called the **SEMEN**.

MALE REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS



The URETHRA is only one and it meets the two vasa deferentia and then continues through the length of the penis to the URINARY OPENING. The urethra allows either the elimination of urine or the ejaculation of semen. It is impossible for both to take place at the same time.

The PENIS is a mass of spongy tissue surrounding the urethra. Erection occurs when the tissue fills with blood. When ejaculation occurs about 1 teaspoonful of semen is normally ejaculated at a time, amounting to approximately 500 million sperms. It only takes 1 of these to unite with the egg to form a baby.

When the boy is near the age of 14 the testicles start producing sperm. He is able to bring forth children every day until old age. The woman differs here by being able to conceive on the average every 28 days.

Picture 15

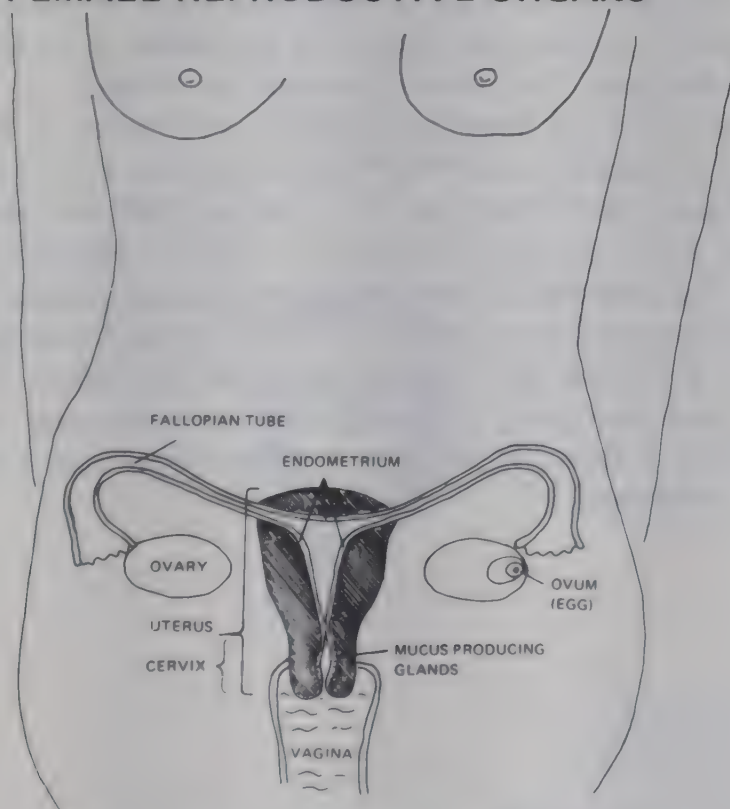
This is a picture of the female reproductive organs.

A woman has two OVARIES. They are the female reproductive glands. They are located on either side of the uterus. They produce the EGG CELL or OVUM. The eggs are all in the ovary.

The UTERUS or WOMB is where the baby will grow for nine months.

At its upper end on each side are the FALLOPIAN TUBES.

FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS



Picture 15: Female reproductive organs

They are each about 5 inches long. They carry the egg to the uterus.

The internal walls of the uterus are covered with a mucus lining called the **ENDOMETRIUM** which can receive and nourish the fertilized egg until birth. If fertilization does not occur, part of this lining detaches itself and is removed as part of the menstrual flow. With each cycle a new lining is formed. The lower part of the uterus is called the **CERVIX**. The **MUCUS-PRODUCING GLANDS** are very important in the fertility of the woman. They feed the sperm and keep it alive while it swims to the egg.

The **VAGINA** is a tube. It joins the cervix to the external genital organs. It receives the penis during sexual intercourse.

Our main aim is to learn about ovulation. What does ovulation mean? It means 'egg release'. We now want to know 'When is the egg released in you?'

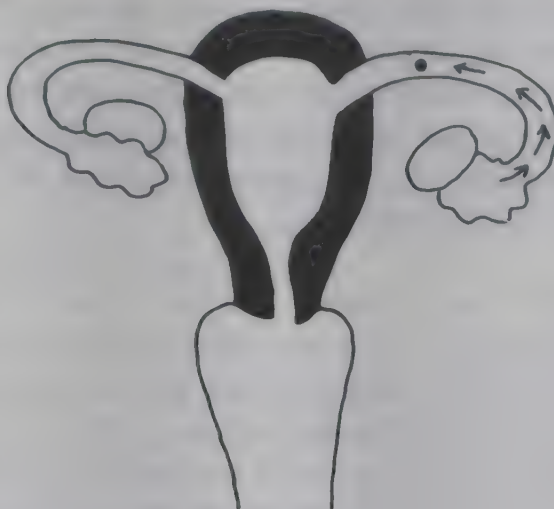
Picture 16

(a) Every month an egg in the ovaries matures. The egg is so tiny we need a microscope to look at it. When the egg matures in the ovary it moves through the fallopian tube to the uterus. It happens about once every 28 days. How can we know the egg is there? While the egg is getting mature the ovaries send messages to the uterus. They know that they will soon send you an egg. You have to prepare a nest to receive it. When a chicken has to lay an egg what does she do? Does she lay just any place? Only a stupid chicken will do that. It will go out and find a special place — make the place a little soft. If it sees grass around, it will gather it. In the woman the lining thickens inside the uterus. This is the preparation for her egg.

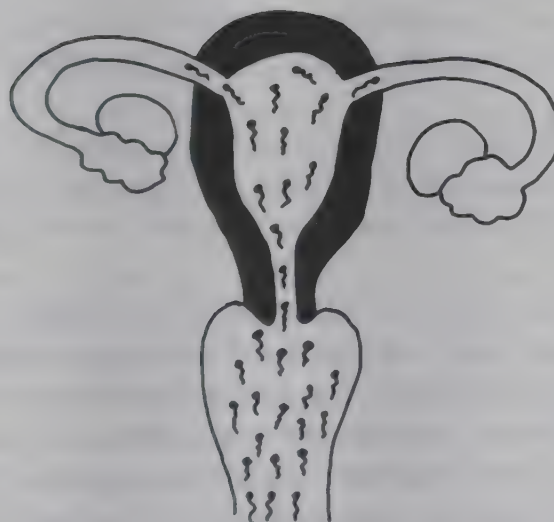
Now, how are we to know that blood is thickening in the uterus? What are the signs for it? We secrete something from the vagina and it is white. You know how pap looks. We give a white discharge. It is a warning that very soon the egg will drop into the uterus. When the egg is ripe, before it falls, the discharge changes. It becomes very slippery. This discharge is called mucus. Because it is mature it will be very thick. When you have catarrh and you blow your nose you see the phlegm is very thick and slippery. When a woman sees this secretion from her vagina, the egg is ripe. Any moment from now our laying will take place. Before the egg falls off, the texture in the slipperiness is loose. To see if it is slippery you take it between two fingers and stretch it. It stretches.

WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE A BABY STARTS TO GROW

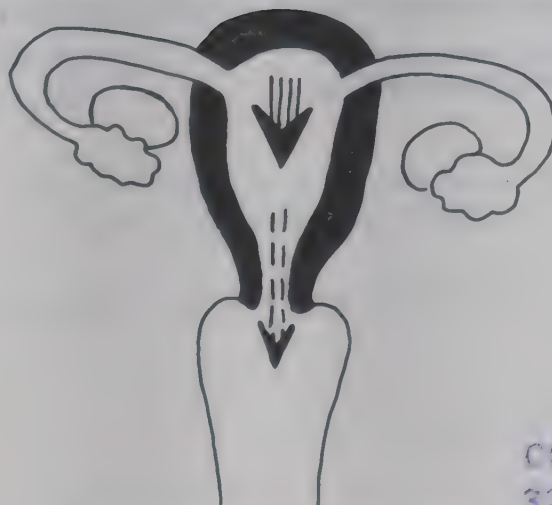
(a)



(b)



(c)



Picture 16: How a baby is made

The first time you see this mucus, it means the egg will soon drop. I mean the first time not the first day. Some women have all the changes in one day. In the morning, they will see the cloudy mucus and before evening it will stretch very long. As you grow older the changes are not as clear as for the youth between 16 and 20 years of age. But remember, the 'egg release' occurs when the mucus stretches very long, or there is a sensation of slipperiness.

(b) If the male wants to sow his seed in you then it has to pass through the vagina, into the uterus, and then into the tubes. Without the mucus this sperm cannot go anywhere. It will die within seconds. The only way to keep this sperm alive is to have the stretchy mucus. It is food for the sperm. It can 'chop' it. It can swim in it.

When this fertile mucus is put under a microscope the lines are parallel so the sperm can penetrate. No curves. The sperms can swim right through. When the mucus is thick and doesn't stretch it will appear criss-crossed under the microscope. No sperm can swim through these lines.

If you want a baby you can have intercourse during the fertile mucus. If you don't want a baby and you see the mucus you have to abstain.

(c) If the egg does not meet the sperm it dies in about 24 hours. Then, during the menstrual period, the dead egg along with the lining in the uterus, is carried away when bleeding occurs. This is the beginning of a new menstrual cycle.

Some of you here may be breastfeeding. Some women are in their period one month later. Others wait two years before their menses appear. So you can use this method before your menses appear. You can be checking every day for your ovulation or 'egg release'. It will come before your menses. When you become in control of your sexuality you will see your marriage beginning to work. You will be very happy.

What is going to happen if you get pregnant too soon? Will you get 'fears' and abort it? Nobody sees. Does it matter who sees you? If you kill someone's children, apart from the laws, does it matter? This is a matter between you and God.

The next class will be on charting.

11 Charting

(Review Picture 16: How a baby is made)

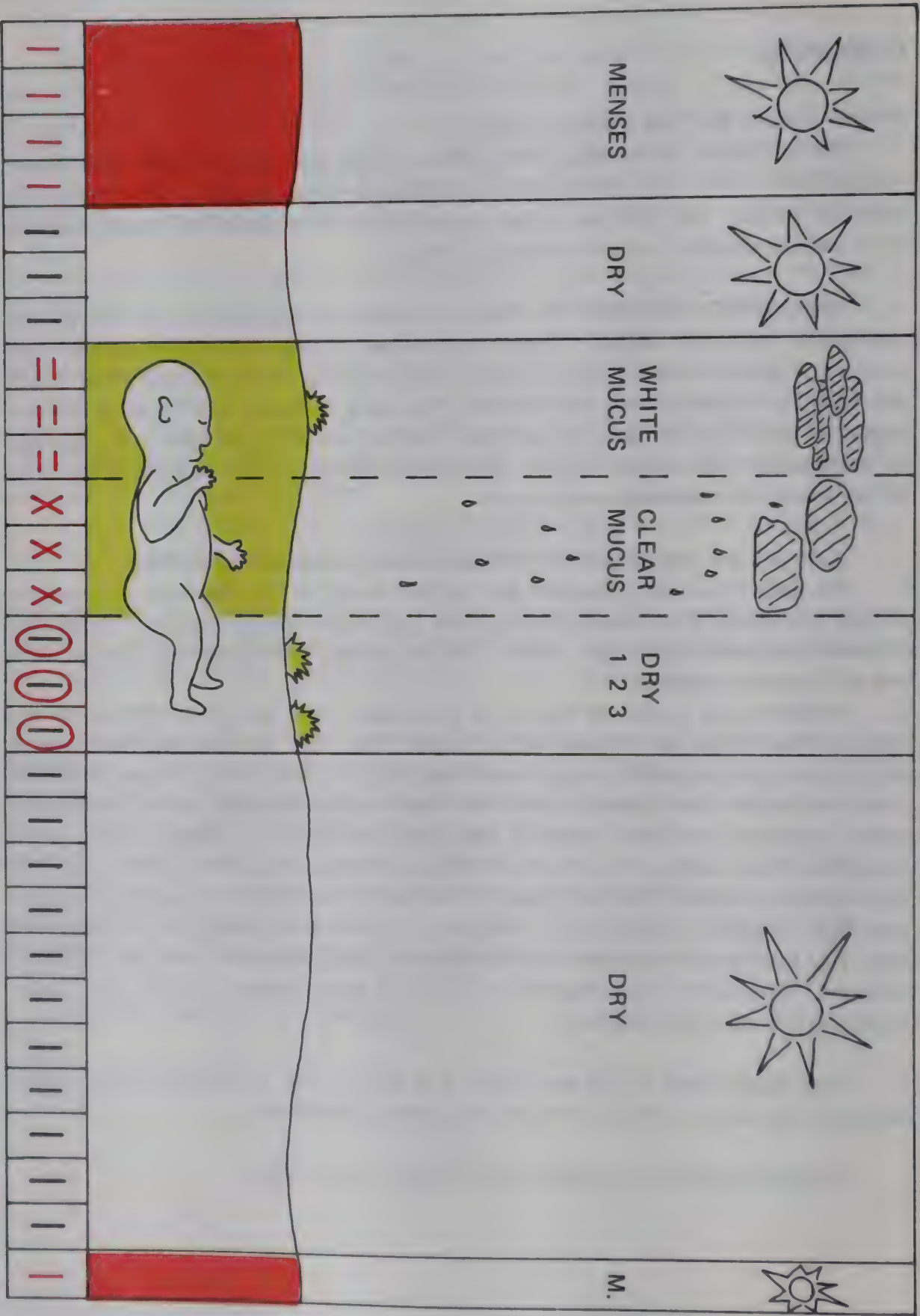
We will teach you to keep a chart of your cycle. Your cycle is NOT the calendar method you know. The month you are going to know about is about what we discussed before. The first day of my menses to the first day of my menses again is my menstrual month. And this is called a CYCLE.

Although you will learn to chart your cycle it does not mean you will be qualified to teach the method. You are not trained to help in certain situations. How would you teach a woman who has been breastfeeding for 4 months? How would you teach a woman coming off the pill? You have to study how to teach in these situations and today we are only going to teach you how to chart your own situation. So don't teach your cycle to others. Everyone is different and you must study these differences before teaching someone else.

So if you are beginning to chart there are some rules you must follow:

1. We need to see your husband also so that he will know you must abstain from sex for one cycle. That means you must see the mucus clearly. You don't know the difference between your man's sperm and the mucus, and if you don't abstain you will get confusing results.
2. Another rule is that of the Early Day Rule. After you have charted for one cycle the next cycle can include the Early Day Rule. You can have sex every second day in your pre-ovulatory stage. Never two days in a row. Why? Because beginners often confuse the man's sperm with the woman's mucus. So to get a clear reading you should have sex only every alternate day. (Review Picture 11 woman's cycle — the Early Day Rule). Look at this and you have your menses. After your menses you come to have dryness before the fertile period. The period before the fertile period is called your pre-ovulatory phase. Then with your pre-ovulatory phase we tell beginners after you have seen one month you use alternate days. After that you become more managed. You don't need alternate days in the post-ovulatory phase. But at the beginning it is very complicated.
3. Peak Rule: What is the peak rule? It is the last day of stretchy mucus. For 3 days after this day you should have no sex to avoid conception.

Follow these rules and you'll be sure to learn the method.



Picture 17: Charting for literates — words — 5 symbols

From this moment on, the woman will have to check herself to see what she is excreting from her vagina. Everytime she goes to uritnate she will wipe herself – just on the outside. (Emphasis on not inserting fingers into the vagina is important). She will wipe herself with toilet roll or pieces of cloth she has put aside especially for wiping. She will look at the toilet roll and see what there is. She must do the stretch test. (Teacher explains this). The woman will then get her chart out in the evening and mark down the symbol for what she saw that day.

The woman will choose from 5 symbols. They are a blue stick for dry, red = for pap, red x for stretchy mucus, a blue stick with a red circle around it for the 3 days after the peak, and a red stick for menses. (Teacher puts symbols on the board. These are the main symbols we will use for now. Teacher should mention that for those women who are always seeing mucus that the symbol for non stretchy mucus in the post–ovulatory phase is a blue =).

Picture 17

This shows us how one woman charted. When she had her menses what symbol did she use?..... For how many days?..... What is the symbol for dry days?..... How many days did she mark?..... What does the red equal sign mean?..... For how many days?..... What is the red x for?..... For how many days?..... How many dry days after that until her menses?..... Why are 3 days circled in red after the last day of stretchy mucus?..... How many fertile days does this woman have during this cycle?.....

(Teacher hands out charts to everyone along with blue and red pencils).

Picture 18

(Teacher holds this chart up for all to see). This is good for 7 average cycles. What is a cycle?.....

Look at the chart. You see cycle day. These are the days of your cycle not the days of the month. Find date. There is a place for the day of the month. Now look at the next row called sexual intercourse. Many of you are probably wondering why this is necessary. You may get an unexpected case where you and your husband may go and get drunk then you come back and you want each other but your heads are not clear as to where you are with O.M. "What is going to happen?". You are going to 'pick seed'. So you have to mark the sexual intercourse line. If you have sex today you put a blue dot there. (Teacher puts a dot on the board). You don't have to worry that I will tell others because I don't know most of you – when you come with your charts I will read them, I am not interested in finding out how many times you've had sex in the month but for your own convenience you should put a dot there when

THE CYCLE

The time from the first day of one menses to the first day of the next menses is called a CYCLE. The first day of the menses is DAY ONE of the cycle. At every new menses start on a new line.

Cycle Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Month	March			29	30	31	April		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
Date	27	28					1																									
Sex Int.																																
Menses, etc.	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	=	=	X	X	X	X	①	①	①	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I				
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Charts can be obtained from O.M. Centre, P. O. Box 5547, Accra, Ghana

Picture 18: Fertility awareness chart and example for regular cycle

you have sex. And look at where it writes menses, etc. That is really the place you have to chart.

So let us practice using a chart. What is today?..... March 27th. (Teacher refers to picture 18 for guidance. While students mark their charts the teacher guides them by first marking the chart on the board).

Write it down where it says date. Let us say today is the 1st day of my menses or my cycle. Put 27 in the cycle day 1 column. What will day 2 be?..... 28th. Then fill the rest of the days..... 29, 30, 31, April 1, 2, 3, 4, and so on. From this I will know my cycle day.

I don't say you have to wait till the day you have your menses before you start charting. You can start charting on your 10th day when you see pap or when you are dry. It doesn't matter. What does matter is, what you chart.

If I have my menses today, the 27th, I put a red stick on the menses line. Another day of menses I will put another stick. The following day, of menses, another red stick. After 3 days I don't have my menses. (Give time for the students to do the same on their charts).

I wipe — and please — I repeat again — I wipe — I don't say go and insert your finger. DON'T INSERT. Everyone should insert their finger in their eye. Is it wet? Yes. Put your finger in your ear and you will get a stain. Is it not wet? Yes. In every hole we have there is wetness so if you insert you are going to get confusing results. You don't need to insert. You go to toilet. You use your normal toilet roll. Just wipe and watch it. If there is nothing you are dry. If you see pap or mucus you touch it with your fingers to see if it will stretch. If it stretches it is fertile.

And if I feel dry then what am I going to put with my blue pencil? A blue stick. Then the next day I see nothing again, I put the dry symbol. Three more days of nothing — dry.

Then if I start seeing pap in the pre—ovulatory stage it is a warning that very soon the stretchy mucus will come. I will lay an egg. I will ovulate. If it is a warning, I use red and make an equal sign. It equals your chances of having a baby. The next day, pap again. What sign?..... When your pap changes to stretchy mucus what are you going to mark? A red cross. It means the egg is ripe. The next day the same. What date is that? April 7th. Then for two more days I see the same mucus so I put a red cross. Until what happens? I see nothing.

When the mucus ceases and I see nothing what do I put? A blue stick. But what happens, when the stretchy mucus ceases and I see something sticky, what do I put? A blue equal sign (=). For the next two days I am dry so I put blue sticks. But who has seen something? (If no one answers refer to Picture 11, the woman's cycle and review it. Review peak.) The last day of your stretchy mucus is called your peak day. You will never know which day is your peak until the day after. When you go through the whole day seeing nothing stretchy you will know that the day before was your peak. The PEAK rule means three days of abstinence after the stretchy mucus is finished. You put a red circle around each of the three blue sticks. Even if you continue seeing the pap for the three days after the peak, put a blue equal sign and circle it in red. Why do we circle the three days? We tell you that the egg lives for 24 hours. After that it dies. So the egg can wait for the sperm and we say that after the three days the egg is surely dead and the sperm has nothing to meet with.

Other symptoms, aside from the mucus, can help us recognize ovulation. Some of us will feel a lower back pain, or a short sudden pain in the lower abdomen from one of the ovaries or a slight blood stain. But none of these are as accurate as the stretchy mucus symptom. (Teacher explains .

After the three red circle days a woman is dry or with non stretchy mucus until her menses. So put blue sticks until my menses return on April 23rd. What cycle day is that? 28.

Now we will have another practice in charting. Begin a new cycle month. (Assistant goes about helping). We have done my cycle but let us do yours this time. Today is the 27th of March and you have begun your menses. Everyone should put the date down and mark the menses. Mark four days of menses. Let us now chart 7 days of dryness. What sign do you use? A blue stick. What do you see when you are dry? Nothing. When you see the pap coming what stage are you in? Pre—ovulatory stage. What mark do you put? Red equal sign. Put it for 2 days. Then you have the stretchy mucus for 4 days. What is the sign for stretchy mucus? A red cross. Then put dry days until the 28th day of your cycle. What did you forget? The 3 red circle days. Why are they important? You could still be fertile. Mark the last day of your stretchy mucus with double crosses. What day is this called? Peak day. Now look at your chart. When do you begin your menses again? The 23rd of April.

(Do examples of a short cycle and a long cycle with the class. Use the blue = symbol).

If you want to use the B.O.M. you cannot be on the pill. The sign you will always see when you are on the pill is dry. You never ovulate. You are never fertile. If you interfere with nature and you want to use the B.O.M. you have to see that there are no obstacles to tell the ovaries not to produce the egg.

For the breastfeeders the Early Day Rule is also very important. But your husband should come to the talks and hear the rules. He will then understand and you will be able to use the method.

(Sing the cycle song. Refer to Chapter Three for the words).

CHAPTER FIVE

TEACHING THE BILLINGS' OVULATION METHOD TO TEENAGERS

(This talk was given to girls at a government secondary school).

Teaching Aids: —Picture 15 or flannel graph of female reproductive organs

—a bird's nest

—Picture 15 or a plastic model of the uterus/female reprod. organs

—a hen's egg

—a pin

(Teacher writes FERTILITY AWARENESS on the blackboard. She puts up the flannel for the flannel board).

You may be surprised as to why we are here. Our topic is on the board. Can anybody read it for us? (Student reads it). Fertility awareness. Do you know what it is?..... Have you ever heard of it?..... Fertility awareness. I have intentionally chosen this topic for you. Today we have come to teach you about your own fertility. How are you to know when you are fertile? That is the purpose of our coming here today.

I have not come here today to teach you family planning. You have no families to plan so family planning is unnecessary for you. You might have heard a lot of stories about your own fertility but today we will center on learning about our own fertility from the Billings' Ovulation Method. Do you know what ovulation means?.... When you ovulate we say you 'lay an egg'. So our topic is going to be centered on 'laying an egg'.

But before we come to the egg let us look at our surroundings and see a lot of the natural things around. Look at this mango tree. (Teacher observes this tree outside the classroom). Does it look the same all the year around?..... No, sometimes the leaves fall off, sometimes they are new. At times there are flowers or fruits.

My main topic is not biology but I want you to tell me some of the things you know. We have come to share our experiences. Although I have come to talk to you I expect to learn something from you too. Take a typical local tree for example, the baobab tree. Do you know the baobab tree? (Students reply). We all chop 'tokuraa'. These are the new green leaves from the baobab tree. At this time of the season have you looked at it? (If no one replies the teacher can say "You have not been looking around. You have been busy looking at yourselves. From our topic today when you go out you will try to look at more things and pay more attention to your surroundings).

If you look at the baobab tree in February or March the dry season is here and the tree is very bare. Sometimes you feel there is no life in it. Have you noticed it?..... Why do you think it is dead?..... Why do the trees sometimes shed their leaves? When there is no water they shed their leaves. They want to conserve water so that the moisture that is there will be sufficient at least until the rains come. When the rains come have you not been seeing the fresh baobab leaves? Yes. So you see everything is green then and the young leaves have come. Is it going to remain like that all the time – only leaves? What is the next stage? It will flower. Can you see a tree getting fruit without first flowering? No. When we leave this room all of us should study these trees. What does the baobab flower look like? Does it look like the flowers on the mango tree? It is white and big. It has a head and a bottom. It looks like a pistil. It is a very big flower. What happens after that? It fruits. What makes it fruit? Does the flower make it fruit? No. It becomes fertilized. By what?..... Does it have husbands? No, but insects. You know when the flowers are there you will see a lot of bees and insects around them. They hover from flower to flower. At times you can get this honey or sweet taste coming out of the flower. The bees go around to pollinate it. You know these things – you are school people. What happens when pollination takes place? The flower fruits. There are some of the flowers that will drop because they haven't been pollinated. It means pollination/fertilization must take place.

I haven't come to talk about a baobab tree just for nothing. We have an aim to reach. We say this is a tree and it has stages. It doesn't look the same all the year round. It has a stage when it will shed all its leaves and look bare. There is a time you will see a lot of leaves on it. Then there is life. It will flower. What is the 4th stage? When pollination takes place it will bear fruits. And you know when you look inside the fruit there is a seed and life can begin again. Do goats flower?..... Do human beings flower?..... Do we bear fruit?.....

(Teacher holds up a bird's nest for all to see). I have something here. Who knows what this is? (Students discover it to be a nest). Is it a human nest? No, it is a bird's nest. When you see something like this nest what does it tell you? The bird is ready to lay eggs. What if the nest is not completed? The bird still has to complete building her nest before she will lay her eggs. Do birds live in nests? No. So it is not always that they need their nest. When you see a nest being prepared then you know that something is happening. The bird is trying to lay an egg. So normally you will see a pair of birds. The two of them are busy building this nest. Usually the male and the female are together. Look at the outside. It is rough. Have you ever taken pains to look closely at it?

(Teacher sends the nest around and asks the students to examine the nest inside). Is the inside as rough as the outside? Look at how nature works. Is the bird as intelligent as a human being?..... We say the human being is so superior but when you even see the insects and the birds at work you might wonder at our superiority. A bird knows that an egg is very delicate. (Teacher shows a bird's egg). If I drop it from here what will happen? It will break. That is why the bird won't lay her egg outside. She will build a nest and the inside of the nest is so soft that when the egg is put there it won't break. When the laying is completed the egg is surrounded by softness.

What other things lay eggs? (Teacher accepts answers — reptiles, snakes, chickens, etc.). How about goats — do they lay eggs?..... How about human beings — do we lay eggs?..... (Students often say no). So you don't believe human beings lay eggs?..... Have you ever taken the pains to find out? How have you come about?..... Look at the bird's nest. The bird will lay her egg and if the egg has been fertilized what will result if the bird sits on the egg? A young bird will hatch and grow. The life of the bird begins with an egg. (Teacher holds up a chicken egg). What is this? It is a chicken egg. So we know that chickens also lay eggs. Now we come to the human beings. Do men lay eggs?..... Do women lay eggs?.....

Now this is why we have come today — to learn what we don't know. Today I am telling you that you are not aware of what is happening in you. We do lay eggs. Women lay eggs. Our egg — the human egg — is not as big as the chicken egg. The human egg is as big as a pin point. (Teacher shows a pin to show the size). Where do humans lay their eggs — on the ground? No. Have you ever seen a human egg? No. It is so small only doctors using microscopes can notice it. We have never noticed it but all of the girls here are old enough to be laying eggs. Do you menstruate? ~~No~~. Yes. Then you lay eggs. Where do human beings lay their eggs? Please don't be shy to answer. You don't know me. After today you may never see me again. If we lay eggs where do we lay eggs — in people's rooms? (Teacher shows picture 15 or a plastic model of the uterus/fem. reprod. organs). Look at this, it is a uterus or a human nest. Can you find this in a man? No. Do men have nests? No. Do men lay eggs? No. Women or mature girls — when they reach puberty around 14 years and up start laying eggs. But every woman, even as soon as she is born, has a nest. Our nest is not like the bird's but it is like this model. (Model is passed around).

(Teacher uses Picture 15 or flannel board to show the female reproductive organs). I will just enlarge the model for you here. This is the womb. It is the uterus or the human nest. These are the ovaries where the eggs are. The fallopian tubes carry the egg to the nest. The vagina is the opening to the human nest.

Does the human nest look the same the whole year round? No. Look at the baobab tree and its stages. Look at this grass outside. When you return from your school holidays is this grass going to be the same? No. Does the grass flower like the trees?..... Does grass produce seeds?..... How do you get the seeds?..... If you don't seed — if you don't flower — you can't continue. So even when you are dying — out of your fruits there are others to continue life. So you get the different stages. And look at the land here outside. Does it look the same the whole year round? When I say 'fertility awareness' it is a very wide topic. It includes all around you plus yourself. If you just learn about yourself it will be very little knowledge — you should always try to broaden your knowledge. Does the ground always look dry? No. When does it look wet? In the rainy season. When you plant something what will happen? Nothing will grow. Nothing will germinate.

So look at the human nest. Does it look the same the whole year round? When you are a baby it is so small, it develops during the years. You will become 14 and 17 years of age and all these organs begin to function. Which part of the human being lays the egg? (Teacher refers to picture 15). The ovaries are responsible. You have two of them. One on each side of the nest. The ovary has to prepare an egg. The egg matures and comes into the nest.

So now do you believe we human beings lay eggs? Yes. The difference is that we don't lay them on the outside. We have our nest on the inside. Now how are we going to know that an egg is being laid by you?..... Can you notice it? No. Remember how the bird prepares her nest to welcome the egg. The human being also prepares her nest for the egg. The egg is so precious. It comes to produce life so its nest has to be very soft and comfortable. In the human, the ovaries have many functions. They are in charge of producing the egg. When the egg is in the process of maturing, the ovaries send the messages to the nest. What is the message? The ovaries produce hormones to go and soften the nest with blood. It makes the human nest soft.

(Teacher holds up the egg). If I keep this egg for two months and then I give it to a hen to hatch will it hatch? No. What will happen to it? It will surely go bad. The human egg cannot even live for more than 24 hours. So the nest is not always ready. Our main problem is "How are we to know when the egg is coming?" Which 24 hours in the menstrual month is it that we lay our egg? When you get back to the dorm today you take your toilet roll. If you don't have any toilet roll, you can just take an old rag — wash it with soap and make sure it is clean. You are only going to use it as a toilet roll. Anytime you go to toilet you will tear a small piece off. When it is finished you will have to find another rag. The only way you can know what is happening within you — the season or stage you are in — is by wiping.

When you go to toilet and you urinate, don't you wipe?..... Each woman must always wipe. If not your pants will always be wet. Isn't it true?..... Is it difficult? No.

When you wipe, the only difference this time is, instead of throwing it away you have to look at it. When you look at it and you see nothing but urine on the toilet roll your nest is very dry. You haven't yet started preparing it. When the ovaries are producing the egg, the process is still in progress and the egg is not yet mature. When you wipe — and you see something white like pap, some girls think they are sick and not normal. This pap is very normal. Without these signs you would never have been born. These signs are very normal and they tell you that you are very healthy. The pap tells you that something is happening inside of you. A nest is being built. When the egg is ripe any moment from now it will drop into the nest. When you wipe at this time, what you see is no more pap. It is now a stretchy mucus. What is stretchy mucus? When you blow your nose what comes out is stretchy mucus. Have you ever had catarrh?..... Is it awful? No. It does not smell. It will only smell if you are a girl who does not keep herself neat. This stretchy mucus does not smell. It tells you the egg is mature or the egg will soon come. The B.O.M. is centered on 'egg release'. So when the mucus becomes slippery this is your egg release. I am not telling you that you will see it for 3 days and then it will end. You see that I am not mentioning figures. When we go out you will see how different each one of you is. Some girls may see it for 2 days, other girls will see it for 3 days. Some may see it for 5 days. What is important is that this slipperiness is the **ONLY TIME** the sperm can pass to the egg. The way is clear for it. If you take a microscope and you look at this stretchy mucus you will see something like this. (Teacher draws criss—crossed lines). At the early stages of the mucus it is very thick. It will appear criss—crossed under the microscope. (Teacher explains the difference in the patterns and the effect it has on the sperm). Some married women will be with their husbands at the pap time because they think the sperm cannot penetrate to the nest and fertilize the egg when it comes. But it can still keep the human sperm alive. When the stretchy mucus becomes clear then the sperm will swim to the egg. The day the egg is released, within 24 hours the stretchy mucus ceases.

So what I want to tell you is that you have 4 stages:

1. The womb is very dry. Nothing is there.
2. When the egg is being prepared, a nest has to be made. The only way we know this is by seeing pap.
3. When the nest is ready and the egg is ripe we start seeing stretchy mucus. When the stretchy mucus ceases the egg has been released but we don't know which time of the day it is released. So at the end of the stretchy mucus you can wait for 3 days and then the egg is surely dead.

You know your egg is finished and now you know you are in a different stage.

4. Because you are students no fertilization has taken place and the egg is dead. It comes out in 12 to 14 days. What happens? This nest which has been lined with blood has to be relined. When it has to be relined what do you see? Blood. When you see blood it is your menses clearing the place. Then the cycle begins again,

Let us summarize what we have learnt. (Teacher writes Billings' Ovulation Method on the board). What does ovulation mean? It means 'egg release'. So now when a young girl starts bleeding what is happening? The nest is being cleared. We now know the girl has a human nest and that human beings lay eggs. You don't have to be married before you start laying eggs. Even students lay eggs.

How many days does a girl bleed? (various answers). Who is telling a lie?.... No one. Do some girls bleed for 3 days? Yes. Even 6? Yes. So you see from our answers before we leave this classroom you should know that you are not all the same — Rose you are not the same as Mary. If you want to learn the B.O.M. you must learn about what? Yourself. Even your bleeding days are not the same. How can I come and say you bleed for 5 days if it is not true?.... So do you see why I wasn't mentioning figures in the beginning? (Picture 11: woman's cycle). This is an example of the average woman's cycle. Let us pretend that we are all average and we all bleed for 5 days. This example is to scale and we all bleed for 5 days. After the 5 days you will wipe and what will you see? Just urine. Your nest is dry and miserable. After some time what will you see? Some pap. We don't know for how many days. After the pap — what will you see? Stretchy mucus. Look at the baby here. If fertilization takes place this is the only time you can fruit. See the baby. When you see the pap it is a warning that an egg is being made — only it is not yet mature. The stretchy mucus comes and it tells you — the egg is ripe. The last day of your stretchy mucus is what we call your PEAK, your highest point. We say that the egg lives for 24 hours. Imagine that the egg is released at 9 p.m. tonight, what is going to happen? It will extend into the next night. So we have added 3 days of abstinence to make sure the egg is dead. Anytime you see your menses watch out for when you see pap, watch out for when you see stretchy mucus. After that add 3 days. Then for the following days until your menses you will be dry. Your menses will then come again.

You won't understand this fully until you begin observing yourself. Just go back to your place and begin observing. We have come to share this knowledge about fertility awareness. There are many things happening around you — happening in your body. Many people will tell you stories. One is that when you see blood..... what is it? That it is only when you sleep with a man that you will see blood.

Is it really important to come and teach you about your own fertility? We want to enlighten you on your own fertility. We want to clarify some of these stories. Science has improved so much and now old beliefs are found to be false. Some other taboos are:

1. When you are in your period you cannot have sex. Your children will be lepers or albinos. We have normally planned babies conceived during the menses.
2. If the breastfeeding mother has sex the sperm will spoil the milk. (Show picture 15: female reprod. organs). Sperm comes as far as here (Point out cervix). They are only able to travel to the nest during ovulation to fertilize an egg. When there is no stretchy mucus the sperms cannot go further. They don't even reach past here. They die and fall out. Now how can they spoil the breast milk? It is just to tell you politely – give way to the wife who is not pregnant or breastfeeding.
3. Telling a child not to walk backwards because if it meets a cock the child will die. Is it true? No. What is the idea behind saying something like this? You want to teach the child not to walk backwards because if there is a stone or a fire the child will fall and hurt himself. You just want to frighten the child and prevent him from doing something.

That is how taboos are.

You cannot go and clear someone's land to make your own farm without permission. You cannot leave Nandom and go to Lawra to make a farm without the consent of the landlord. He will allow you to legally acquire your plot. Your bodies are the temples of God. You must undergo legalized wedlock before uniting the man and woman's bodies together. Too many of our young people are abusing the future beauty of marriage.

Look at this land outside this window. We have fertilizer. What do we use fertilizer for?..... Do we use it in our rooms? No, we use it on our farms to make our crops fertile. We have different types of fertilizer, but the most common in this area is ammonia and 15–15–15. Which one looks like salt? Ammonia. Which one looks like millet grains? 15–15–15. When you have one acre of land what do you do?..... How many bags of 15–15–15 will you use? 2. bags. How many bags of ammonia?

bag. When you do that and you use it at the correct time what happens? The fruits are going to be very nice. But what happens if I am so greedy and I take 30 bags of 15–15–15 and 15 bags of ammonia for just 1 acre of land? What do you think will happen? I will destroy my crop and also the land. Nothing will want to grow there. Fertilizer is good but you can misuse it and get bad results.

We have a lot of drugs. Aspirin is sometimes good. But too much will destroy your stomach. Look at marijuana sometimes called wee. It's a drug. The misuse of it is harmful and it can send you mad. Sometimes a woman is born with dormant ovaries or ovaries that don't lay eggs. Doctors have all sorts of ways of curing these things. Sometimes they will give you the contraceptive pill for 3 months and it will make the ovaries relax. When you stop taking the pill the ovary will sometimes lay the egg. But with the continuous use of this drug – day after day after day– you will make yourself like that one acre of land where the 30 bags of 15–15–15 and 15 bags of ammonia were used. If you continue on 'drugs, drugs' your health will be poor. This is something for you to think about.

When you go out now you can take a paper and make your own chart. We have charts for students but I can't give them to you without giving you a lesson on 'How to Chart'. Next class we'll teach you to keep a proper record of your own fertility. It will do you good in the future.

(The lesson on 'How to Chart' can be done the same way as in Chapter Four: Teaching the Billings' Ovulation Method to Literates).

CHAPTER SIX

TEACHING THE BILLINGS' OVULATION METHOD TO BREASTFEEDERS

(This talk was given at a child welfare clinic. It is for breastfeeders, women weaning their babies and those women with weaned babies. The latter are usually included up to 5 months after weaning. By then their cycle should become quite regular.

This introduction may seem repetitious but it is necessary. We have to explain the benefits of having intercourse with the husband while breastfeeding. We have to explain the truth of some very strong taboos. We have to stress the importance of telling the husband of his role. The father, mother and baby are very important and we feel this introduction is necessary to communicate our ideas to the people adequately).

1. Introduction

(Refer to beginning of Chapter 2 or Chapter 3).

(The following is a different approach from the one used in Chapter 3).

Picture 2. Who can tell us what this is? It is millet. Is it in a room or on top of a roof? No, it is on a farm. How many farms are there in the picture? Two. Is the acreage the same? Yes. The farms are equal in size but is the produce the same? No. Why? The first farm has six stalks and the second farm has three stalks. The result is that the six stalks give a poor yield because they are crowded. Which of these two farms do you wish to possess? The first one. Why? The three stalks give the better yield. If you want a good crop you have to learn to keep a farm like the first one. You shouldn't be greedy with your land — space your seeds evenly so you will get a good crop. So now we leave the farm and talk about the human beings.

Picture 3. You will be surprised to learn that the human body works a lot like the farm. What do you see here? Healthy children from one family and hungry children from another family. With the same acreage, two men have married two women the same year — the same day. In six years one couple had six children and in six years the other couple had three children. There is nothing wrong with it. They are very lucky they are still all alive. Do you know families like this?..... Are there couples who have children every year?..... Yes it is possible. When there is no child on the back, there is a child in the tummy. We haven't come to insult anyone, we have come to enlighten you about yourselves. Is there a way we can stop it so we don't get children every year?..... Even if we do get six children is there a way of spacing them properly like the crops on the farms?..... So which of these families would you like to possess — the six children or the three children? The three children. Why?

They are not burdens. In the family of six, the baby plus the other young one needs the mother's attention. We can't blame the parents. You are a mother — you are a father — you love your children. But you the husband have to work to care for the children. Then the woman is left alone to care for them. A woman cannot be a machine. Look at all these children. (Teacher points to family two on picture). How can she give her attention to all these children? Don't make mistakes having your children. If your child is walking then you can sit down together and plan your next child. Don't be highly pregnant during the farming season. You can't even help your husband on the farm.

The first five years of a child's life is the time the child molds her character and her structure. A lot of people get lame when they are still young because they get a poor diet. A child needs so much in the first five years to grow up properly. Is it possible to give the child a proper diet and education if you have so many other young ones?

So now you say, "Madam, what you say is nice but what can we do? I have gone to the hospital and taken other methods of family planning." I haven't come here today to say the other methods are bad. I don't know about the other methods so I can't talk much about them. However, I have met some women who have been on the pill and they say, "Oh madam, I always feel sick when I take the pill and yet I have to do something. My husband won't leave me. I am the only woman. It means every year I have to have a child. What other alternative can you give me?" For those who want to be on the natural method there is a way we can help you. You can still be with your husband without problems. This does not mean that you can now go back home and be with your husband. What you hear today you will have to go home and discuss with your husband. If you decide you want to do the B.O.M. you can come to our center and we'll teach you how to chart. This means we'll teach you to know the time when you can 'pick seed'. You don't want to 'pick seed' just now so you will have to abstain from sex at this fertile time.

Some of you will say, "Ah madam my baby is now three months old. I can't stay with my husband because his sperms will spoil my breastmilk." Is it true? Have you heard this before?..... This is only an old belief. It is true that if you are breast-feeding a three month old baby and you become pregnant your breastmilk will become less and your body will be very weak. When you are pregnant something else is happening to you and you often don't have sufficient breastmilk for the child. So the best thing to tell you is that, "If you sleep with your husband the breastmilk will spoil." But if you sleep with your husband and no pregnancy occurs how does that affect the breastmilk?..... Will it spoil? No.

Our people used to say, "If you have a baby — give way." Somebody else must be there to be with the man. The best control method used in those days was another wife. How many of you men can marry three wives? Very few people today can keep three wives unless they are millionaires. Our forefathers had six wives because they wanted labourers. These days we know you can hire labour and pay people. Now today people even find it difficult to marry one wife. What do you do if you have one wife and you have children? Will you bring in another woman?.....

You are sitting here and most of you are having babies. Many of you haven't had your menses. Is it true? Yes. Imagine that your menses haven't come for two years. Because you are breastfeeding for these two years you can't be with your husband. It is a direct way of telling your husband to go and get a girlfriend. How can you tell a normal man not to have sex for two years? So sometimes we have a lot of family problems. We, the women, are driving the men into that.

Some taboos bring in more wives. "When you are pregnant for six months and you continue having sex you will deliver a child with a bald head or the baby will be poisoned." This is not true. It has no effect on the child. It even helps in delivering.

Many women don't want to be with their men after giving birth but even four weeks after delivery it is good for sex to continue for the relationship. The man is not forced to look for a lover. With the B.O.M. the breastfeeder is taught to look for her fertile time. It will come before the menses. I am sure some of you know of women who never got their menses and they still conceived very soon after giving birth. You can know your fertile time and avoid this kind of an accident. Using the B.O.M. we will teach you how to avoid this kind of an accident. Using the B.O.M. we will teach you how to avoid conception and still breastfeed and also make your marriage happy.

You may ask, "Why can we begin having sex at such an early time after delivery?" More than likely you won't be fertile at that time and you and your husband can enjoy being together. If the woman is fully breastfeeding and she finds constant dryness, she and her husband can use the Early Day Rule. This means alternate days, and night time only. The time will come when the woman's fertile signs will appear. During that time it is advised to be very cautious and abstinence may be necessary up to four weeks at a time. So if you use the time soon after you deliver, the time of abstinence following won't be so difficult.

We advise sexual intercourse during breastfeeding because it gets rid of the tension between the man and the woman. The relaxed atmosphere of love touches the child and the child grows up to be content and loved. The child needs both the father's and the mother's love. If your life together is peaceful the child will know it. If your life together is strained and not comfortable the child will know it.

(Teacher uses a bird's nest to introduce the idea of laying eggs: refer to Chapter 4: Teaching the Billings' Ovulation Method to Teenagers).

I have come to tell you that just like that bird we human beings also lay eggs. Many of you don't believe that humans lay eggs, so I want to show you the human nest. (Teacher shows picture 15 or a model of uterus/fem. reprod. organs). This is the human nest. It is in the woman. If the woman lies down and we cut her open we will see a nest in her body. When you kill a chicken and you break it open, you will at times see that the chicken was laying an egg. You say she was having a 'gyel-wuo.' Have you ever heard that the chicken has a 'wuo'? This is the human 'wuo'. It is because you don't know that special day you have to stay, at times for two years, without going to your husband. Before your menses return there will be one day that you will lay an egg. If you and your husband come together when you lay the egg you will get pregnant. But before that day of laying an egg comes there will be a sign. Only the woman can see the sign. When the woman sees this sign no sexual intercourse should occur. Tell your husband. If you both decide that you can overcome your sexual desires when necessary you can come to our center and we will start you on this method. You will need the cooperation of your husband or it will not be successful for you.

In the human nest there are two ovaries. They produce the eggs. (Teacher shows Picture 15). For the breastfeeders, the ovaries do not lay eggs because they are busy producing a lot of breastmilk. When the baby begins having other food besides breast milk, he doesn't suck as much as before. 'Egg laying' will usually begin. The ovaries are not so busy making milk and they have time to begin laying eggs again. If you want to lay an egg give the baby solid foods instead of breast milk. If you don't want to lay an egg just let the baby suck more. We want the mother to breastfeed because her milk is the best food. Anyone telling you to buy a feeding bottle is deceiving you. If you know you can breastfeed your baby, that is the best way. Don't stop breastfeeding just to get your menses and be with your man. You can breastfeed and be with your man without having your menses and without fears of pregnancy.

(Teacher explains Picture 10: mother nature's cycle and Picture 11: the woman's cycle for illiterates and Picture 16: How a baby is made for literates).

Breastfeeding mothers are very delicate to work with. We have to prevent conception. If it were the childless couple we were meeting right now I could say a lot more. There wouldn't be any mistake. You want to achieve pregnancy. If you were all pregnant women we could go on because you won't be laying any eggs for a long time. Once you are breastfeeding and your babies are so young your situation is very delicate. If your husband is a 'problem' and he allows you to come and learn our method — fine — you come and we will teach you.

The next time we meet we will give you charts and then you will keep a record about yourself. (The next meeting time should be announced).

11 Charting

The breastfeeding mother who doesn't have her menses is in her Early Dry Days. She is waiting for her ovulation or 'egg release'. While some women will ovulate 2 months after delivery, others will ovulate 2 years later. This means that some women will see their menses in the 2nd month, but others will not see them until 2 years have gone by.

The woman will have to observe herself everytime she goes to urinate. (Teacher explains how to observe plus the Stretch Test). The woman will then get her chart out in the evening and mark down the symbol for what she saw that day. Even if she saw stretchy mucus only once that day then that is what she will mark. It is the fertile signs we are looking for. She will choose from the following symbols: (Teacher puts them on the board). red 1 for menses, blue 1 for dry, red = for early pap, red x for eggwhite, red O for zero days, blue = for late pap, and . for sexual intercourse. After one month of charting the teacher will guide the student to use blue = for late pap if the woman is having mucus but it is not persistent or if the woman is having persistent mucus. The teacher now introduces the symbols. Refer to the appropriate chapters).

Some women will be dry most of the time. Some of you will be having mucus most of the time. Yet others will always be having mucus. All of us are different.

Look at the following three examples of charting when breastfeeding.

Picture 19

(a) This woman was dry most of the time. Everytime she saw pap she followed it with 3 red zeros. (Teacher explains 3 red zeros, early pap, Early Day Rules, slipperiness sign:, and late pap. She also explains the chart day by day).

(b) This woman had sticky mucus most of the time. This is an example of partial use of the double infertile sign. The partial use of the double infertile sign allows intercourse immediately after the pap but not during it. This is used only after the woman has been charting for at least six weeks. By then she should see the difference between the pap that leads to eggwhite and the pap that never does so. She can then chart this infertile pap in blue and leave out the 3 zero days. (Teacher explains chart day by day). These women should avoid intercourse on any day when there is a change in their discharge. The change will be either an increase in the stretchiness, the quantity or it will be more clear in color and slipperiness. The three zero days should follow.

(c) This woman's chart shows the full use of the double infertile sign. Don't forget the Early Day Rule. With this use there is a greater chance of pregnancy.

If the husband and wife know this and are able to accept the consequences then they can go ahead. (Teacher explains chart day by day).

Now that you will begin charting you will have some rules to follow. You will notice that there will be many days whereby abstinence is necessary. Abstinence is very important and there will be long periods whereby patience through love will be necessary. It will not be easy, but because of your love for each other you will be able to do it.

(When the teacher introduces the following rules she should show examples of how to chart them on the board. If the students become worried about all the rules to follow, tell them the concept Dr. John J. Brennan states: "When you are dry the sperm will die; when you are wet a baby you can get.")

Rules:

1. Abstain from sex for the first two weeks if you are always dry and the first four weeks if you see mucus or menses. (Teacher explains why).
2. Chart always. Even if you are always dry you should chart nightly.
3. Early Day Rule during breastfeeding and postweaning 4 months. This means using alternate days, evenings only.
4. Abstain during all days of pap marked in red=. Any pap day is followed by three red zero days meaning 3 days of abstinence.
5. Abstain during all days of eggwhite and the following three zero days. The night of the 4th day is safe.
6. Abstain when there is any feeling of slipperiness or unusual wetness. Avoid that day plus 3 extra dry days.
7. Abstain on days of spotting with blood. Follow with 3 zero days.
8. Abstain the two weeks after weaning the baby off the breast.
9. Abstain during the 1st cycle when the menses return. (Teacher explains irregularity of mucus during that time).
10. Abstain when the mucus pattern sometimes changes and becomes confusing. Wait until it becomes normal again.
11. For the next four months after weaning you should follow the Early Day Rule and abstain when the pattern becomes confusing.
12. For the breastfeeding mothers with menses we have some rules for their post-ovulatory stage. If you have one day of pap, abstain, but you may have intercourse the next night if that day is dry. If two days of pap, abstain those two days. You can have intercourse the next night if that day is dry. If three days of pap, abstain on those days, plus 3 more days of dryness until the 4th night.
13. Avoid genital contact on fertile days.

After one month of charting we will be able to understand more clearly as to what is occurring within you. It is important to emphasize the necessity of you keeping in touch with us and coming to us on the given dates.

Now let us do some examples ourselves. (Teacher gives out charts and red and blue pencils. Please review the different approaches used for literates and illiterates. Teacher explains the different parts of the chart). Put the date down. (Assistant goes around helping).

1. Make 6 dry days.
2. One day of early pap. What does it look like?
3. 4 dry days What should be remembered? Even 1 day of early pap must be followed by 3 red zeros. Why?
4. 3 dry days.
5. 3 sticky mucus or early pap.
6. 5 dry days. What did you forget?
7. 1 day of eggwhite.
8. 4 dry days. What should you do? Why?
9. 1 day of slipperiness.
10. 3 dry days. What should you have done?
11. 3 early pap days.
12. 5 dry days. What do you remember?
13. 4 eggwhite.
14. 13 dry days. Anything?
15. 5 days menses.

Can you point out the time you think you ovulated or 'laid an egg?' Which dates, in this example that we have done, were safe for having sexual intercourse? (If the teacher feels that it will not confuse her class she can do an example of not persistent mucus and also an example of persistent mucus).

(Repeat rules 1 and 2 for the beginners. The students take their charts home and are told to come back in two weeks for further consultation. At the next meeting, after the general talk, the individual meetings should be held. Each case is different and these differences are important to recognize for the prevention of conception).

CHAPTER SEVEN

ABORTION

Would you destroy your farm before harvest time? No. Yet some people are destroying their babies before they are born. We all know the evils of abortion and it is something no one likes to talk about. Yet someone, at this very moment in this world, is having an abortion..... and it should be our concern. What is an abortion? It is the killing of an unborn baby. So you say this does not concern you. Listen to this story.

Once there lived a cat and a mouse. One day the cat was chasing the mouse to catch for a meal. A cock saw the hot chase and went over to Mr. Goat and asked him to let them mediate between the cat and the mouse. Mr. Goat turned down Mr. Cock's suggestion with the excuse that the incident did not concern them. This was in a typical local village. During the chase the mouse climbed onto a pile of pots which crumbled down and killed an old man who was lying beside the posts. Among this tribe the death of an old man needs the spilling of blood. The cock was arrested amidst a lot of crowing to inform Mr. Goat he was in for trouble. Mr. Goat still remained disinterested in Mr. Cock's fate. A few days later, the final funeral rites for the old man were to be performed. The funeral drew large crowds from the neighbouring villages, so the need for meat became apparent. Mr. Goat was arrested for the purpose. But before he died, he wished he had a chance to behave differently.

From this story each of you should realize that everyone's life is connected very closely. We are responsible for each other's actions. If it is not you having an abortion will it be your daughter? Will it be your aunt?..... your sister?..... your friend?..... or someone else you love?.....

I heard about a woman who had an abortion and now she realizes that she did wrong. She has a recurring dream of looking into the gates of heaven and seeing a beautiful little child looking at her and asking "Why".

Life is a gift from God. Look around and see how animal mothers care for their young. Are we not wise enough to do the same? Children are treasures. They are for us to love not to kill. One day we will have to answer the question of "You knew it was wrong why didn't you teach others about it?".

A snake just recently killed my mother turkey. She had been sitting on eggs. I put them under the mother hen and she dutifully sat on them and hatched three. She is now proudly walking about with them protecting them from the hawks and finding ants for them to eat. If your daughter became pregnant while in school would you want her to kill the unborn? Would you, her mother, not welcome the baby into your home? Make your decision right now and let your daughter know you love life because it may be her that will be having the abortion tomorrow.

All users and teachers of Natural Family Planning are fighting a very serious war. The war against the countless unborn babies who cannot defend themselves. You and your wife may think you don't need O.M. today, but your children and their children need to be protected from countless murders against the unborn. You are therefore the most involved in saving generations from sometimes fatal abortions of which your daughter or mine may be the victim. The only weapon you will need at the battle front will be to get properly educated now — and make sure that you hand it down to others who may never get the opportunity you have now.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ABSTINENCE

Many people feel that the main problem of the B.O.M. is the part of abstinence. I have had women tell me, "This method is very good but my husband would never like to abstain. He troubles me — too much!".

At times the woman belongs to a polygamous marriage and if her time to be with the man is during her fertile time she can't refuse him. It would be unheard of! Maybe a man comes to you, the teacher, to say that they have tried to abstain but he finds that it is impossible for him. What do you, as an O.M. teacher, do in all these cases?

The following guides may help couples to understand abstinence more clearly.

1. To make a good marriage the man and the woman must make a conscious effort to take individual responsibility to avoid intercourse when necessary. Whenever birds are about to lay an egg you will see the male deeply involved in trying to help the female establish a nest where the eggs will be deposited. This is the same relationship of concern which should be established between a woman and her husband, for the success of the Ovulation Method. The co-operation of the man is highly essential. He should be aware of the time his wife is in her rainy season or the time she is ovulating and he should show her he loves her and respects this time to abstain from sex if they do not want a child. Cocks can be seen waiting while the hen is about to lay her egg. These are lower animals and yet we can learn from them in the way they concern themselves about the welfare of each other.

2. The couple must come to hear the lectures together. The husband must know what the charting is all about so he can understand what is happening with his wife when he looks at the chart. If it is impossible for the husband to attend the lectures, he should read a book on the B.O.M. Even if there is more than one wife in the family the husband should still come to the lecture. If he comes this means he is serious. When the man is embarrassed to go to group lectures the O.M. teacher can arrange a private meeting with the couple.

3. When the woman knows she is in her fertile time she should avoid 'flirting' or 'being sexy'. Often women tend to feel sexier at this time, more so than when they are infertile. They should 'stifle the fire' and 'keep cool'.

4. If you feel the need for sexual intercourse then try to do something else together. Go and weed the garden, take the children for a walk, visit with friends, read to the children, write letters or clean the area around your house.

Look for outlets to release your energy. Don't go and drink at a 'pito' bar. This will tempt you to break your abstinence.

5. But now the children are asleep and it is too dark to do anything. Do you and your wife go into separate rooms? No, it is not necessary. You are both weak human beings though and God can give you strength during this time. He sees that you are trying to do His Will. He will help you if you ask for His help — together. Here is a little prayer to say:

Thank you Lord for today, for the children, for our health and especially for each other. You have blessed our love in so many ways. Please help us to never forget these blessings. Please give us strength to abstain from 'coming together' tonight. Please take it as a gift from us. You have created us and all that is around us. We give you this time of abstinence, as a sign of our thanks and praise. AMEN

You can make up your own. You can say the 'Our Father' and 'Hail Mary'. You can read the Bible. 1 Cor 7:5 "Do not deny yourselves to each other, unless you first agree to do so for a while, in order to spend your time in prayer: but then resume normal marital relations, to keep you from giving in to Satan's temptation because of your lack of self-control".

(GOOD NEWS FOR MODERN MAN: The New Testament in Today's English Version).

During the fertile period, the B.O.M. couple fast from sex to offer God thanks for the gift of each other while waiting to celebrate the safe time for being together. During the time of fasting a special effort is made to better your relationship with God. When you pray together at this time your love with God deepens. If you want to thank someone for something you often give them a gift. You can offer this time of fertility to God as a gift.

After praying and you still can't sleep read a book or a newspaper, discuss current events, or little John's school report.

6. It is not sex which holds the couple together. Rather it is the pleasure of each other's company which is felt through acts of caring. Sex does not always show love or care for the other. Just a simple move of clearing the dishes after a meal tells the woman you love her. Keeping a man's clothes clean and pressed tells the man you love him. When the children are disturbing the mother and the man takes them from her and plays with them, this shows love. When the bath water is ready for the man, this shows love. Little things say a lot.

God speaks to us in many ways and if we watch and listen we will hear what He is telling us. I was sitting outside yesterday and it is the mango season. People are getting long sticks trying to get the fruit off the trees. Young children are braving the abuses of the watchmen as they try to sneak some mangoes. The markets are rich with their yellow color and scent. Soon they will be all finished and we will wait another year to enjoy them. (If mangoes do not grow in your area use a fruit or food that is in season and available only a few times a year). This is like sex. If it is available all the time it is not enjoyed as much. It is taken for granted. If there are breaks from it, the act of love comes to have a deeper meaning for both husband and wife.

CHAPTER NINE

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Your new method of family planning is very good, but I think it has rather come too late for some of us. Some of us don't need it now. I am a man with 11 children and my wife is now in her menopause. Is there any need for us to learn O.M.?

Yes, there is need for menopausal women to learn O.M. Many menopausal women I have come into contact with have stopped having sex for all sorts of reasons that are nowhere near the truth. This has sometimes led to conflict between the husband and the wife. Sometimes these conflicts drive husbands into adultery and others into remarrying.

The Billings' Ovulation Method teaches us that sex during menopause could be more pleasurable than before. These women, who normally in our society look frustrated for lack of company with their husbands, need to be reassured in the presence of their husbands that old held taboos about sex during this period do not hold. When they are assured the chances of a happy life together is assured.

The menopause woman is dry often and does not like the roughness of sex because it hurts. If the man prepares the woman for sex earlier with some foreplay she will become wet in the vagina. Caressing the body and giving 'sweet talk' helps. There is little worry of conceiving at this time so you need not be tense. Instead, you should look back at the life God has given the two of you together and how He has blessed you with each other and your children.

You may thank God together for each other and praise Him in the unity of sex. You are an example to your children. If they see you are still deeply in love they will also try to seek partners that will walk in God's light.

The learning of O.M. is very important to you. Your children are thirsting for the wisdom you give them. Let O.M. be a part of this wisdom. You are also called to fight abortion and save life. The Billings' Ovulation Method will help you do this. (Re: Chapter 7: Abortion and Chapter 5: Teaching the B.O.M. to Teenagers). Can you help those couples who have been together for five years and still don't have a child?

Yes we can. Very few women are born barren. It is just that she doesn't know the time when the egg is released. Remember the egg lives for only 24 hours. Some of us ovulate every month. There are some of us who will ovulate once in a year. In the full year there is only one day of ovulation. We have had clients who have charted throughout the year without the mucus sign. Finally they saw one sign at the end of the year — not December — if you start in March the year will go up to the next March.

We have had those with the very short cycle. They release the egg when they are bleeding and every two weeks they are bleeding. So when we teach you to observe — often there is stretchy mucus when you bleed. This is to show that the egg is coming and that the sperm can go through. The couple can have sex and have a normal baby and yet our great grandparents had a taboo that you shouldn't go to your husband when you are bleeding because you'll give birth to an albino child or the child will become a leper.

At times problems occur due to infection and this is why we say sex must be restricted. It is only between the husband and wife. We must learn to behave as normal beings. A man must be 'jealous' about his wife. There are a lot of diseases you can get from others in the act of sex. If you keep to your husband and you keep to your wife 99% you won't get infection. (Use Picture 15 and 16 to show places where infection can occur).

If you chart for one full year we can help you decide what is happening to you. Some women after being married for 6 months, and not having had a pregnancy, immediately go for a D & C at the hospital. You may think it cleans your nest. It does but it also enlarges the opening for the baby to get out and it enlarges the opening for the fluids and the mucus to get out. When you push instruments through this area you are interfering with the woman's natural process. The mucus glands are often injured or disturbed by a D & C.

Some women have brown stains instead of pap. We will refer you to a doctor. He will give you proper medicine and then your body will function normally.

When the woman has been charting for about 3 months and has seen fertile mucus, we then send the couple for physical check-ups. At times, the man may be at fault.

It is no shame not to have children. Children are a gift from God. You have many gifts from God. You have each other, your health, your parents, your comforts, etc. Thank God together for all your blessings and make an effort to help others when they are in time of need. You will forget about yourself and your worry will be lessened. The stress will disappear and 'coming together' will be an expression of love rather than the tense trying for a child.

This question refers to the woman's cycle picture. How long do you expect the early dry days to be in the cycle?

This is the problem with teaching B.O.M. When we come to teach B.O.M. we don't use any numbers or days. If you want to teach this method don't tell the woman when she has her menses for 5 days that she shouldn't have sex for 14 days following and then the rest are free. When you are using this type of method you are not using the B.O.M.

This works for some women but not all women bleed for 5 days. Some bleed for 3, others for 6. So don't make a general rule. Every woman is different. (Re: Chapter 3: Charting section: First part).

How many eggs can a human being lay?

Once a month a woman lays an egg – one egg. When we say month we mean your menstrual month which is the number of days you take in laying an egg – from the first day of your menses to the first day of your next menses. Sometimes it does happen you can lay two eggs in one month. Do you believe this? There are some parents who have two children born the same day. They do not look alike. They are coming from two eggs. Two eggs have been laid. When you lay these two eggs it happens within the same 24 hours. But most of the time a woman will only lay one egg. Have you ever seen two children born the same day and you can't tell them apart? They are from the same egg. Fertilization takes place in the fallopian tubes, but what happens is that something disturbs the egg and it breaks into two. Instead of coming out it makes itself comfortable and you get two babies looking very alike from one egg.

(The following questions were asked at a secondary school by girls).

Why do some girls bleed at two week intervals at times?

1. They have a short cycle. No early dry days. (Expand on this).
2. The girl has just had an abortion and the body has taken drugs and become confused. It takes time for the body to heal and complications can set in.
3. A shock can cause early menses.

Why do some girls get their menses at two months intervals?

I am telling you that we are not the same. Stress can prevent laying an egg. If you burn the grass too near a tree it may not fruit that year. But the tree is not yet dead. Some people have a cycle in which they don't lay an egg. Once you don't see the stretchy mucus don't worry. As students, your cycles are still not mature. At times they will be long. Other times very short. You are still growing.

It has always been said that if you don't have sex you will then be sick. Is it true?

Do you know any priests? Yes. Has he a wife? No. Do you know any sisters? Yes. Has she a husband? No. Don't they look healthy? Yes. So you see you are turning back to the taboos. When people see that you are a very good girl then they bring you all sorts of taboos. If you don't do this – you will fall ill. They want to make you like them. Some will envy you because you are a virgin. They want you to spoil like them.

For those girls having a two month interval between menses — after the first month can you 'play' during your second month?

This is a very interesting question. From all that we have been telling you — we want you to know that — when the egg is coming you will know. When you grow up and you deliver for some time even two years you won't ovulate. You won't lay an egg. But every day you have to watch yourself. If you are someone who menstruates every two months and you are married you have to follow an Early Day Rule. This means if you have sex today no sex tomorrow and then by evening time you are surely empty of the male sperms. This is necessary because at times the male sperm looks like the female fertile mucus. Look at this egg (Teacher shows a hen's egg. Teacher breaks it open). See this eggwhite. The woman will see this for herself. The male sperm looks like this but experienced O.M. users can differentiate between them. The woman's mucus, when fertile, will stretch. (Teacher shows example pictures of mucus). The male sperm doesn't stretch. When the pap is finished and the mucus is starting, it becomes slippery and that is why we say don't be having sex daily because you won't be able to differentiate. So if you have sex today — tomorrow you shouldn't have sex. Watch yourself. If you are still dry up to the evening and the next morning up to the next evening you are dry, you are free. Continue using alternate days and watch. Most of the time before the stretchy mucus comes you will see pap. That is the warning sign. When it is going to start raining what do you see? Clouds. So that is a warning that it will rain. If we see the clouds and we put a seed in the ground, even though it is very dry, and it rains in the evening will that seed germinate? Yes. Once it is not picked by a bird and the seed is not bad it will germinate. So if you start seeing the pap don't go to the man. But it doesn't matter even if it is every three months that you menstruate. You watch yourself. The most important thing is to watch yourself daily. It doesn't matter whether you bleed every two weeks or two months, you watch yourself and you will know your fertile time. When you don't see stretchy mucus that means there is no egg and when there is no egg, there is no slipperiness or stretchy mucus there.

